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EDITORIAL

THE PLANE TRUTH

Question: Are the mass media a left-liberal conspiracy, as Accuracy In Media mavens and various other right-wing pseudo-scholars have insisted?

Or, do the media have a built-in adversarial role regardless of politics, as various television anchors and other journalists have argued?

Or, are they all in it for the ratings (read dollars), and politics be damned?

Answer: None of the above. Generally the major media internalize the values of The Powers That Be, and the ratings be damned.

If you don't believe it, consider the case of *Shootdown*, NBC's docudrama about the Korean Air Lines passenger jet shot down by the Soviet Union in 1983.

On its face, the network's decision to adapt for television R.W. Johnson's book *Shootdown: Flight 007 and the American Connection* would appear to be a five-years-after-the-fact example for those who see the media as a left-liberal conspiracy—and certainly an embarrassment for the government in power. After all, Johnson's book clearly accuses the Reagan Administration of a cover-up. In fact, however, it turns out that NBC, which is owned by General Electric, a major military contractor, insisted that the final script omit such critical matters as the Air Force's erasure of radar tapes and include material contrary to the thrust of Johnson's thesis—something that even *The New York Times*'s television critic found confusing and "insidious."

Previously, the debate about docudramas has had to do with the propriety of bending history for dramatic effect. Here we sacrifice dramatic effect—and presumably ratings—to bend history. What is NBC afraid of?

Perhaps this is a case in which the new Democratic Congress can use its subpoena powers to go where the media have feared to tread.

GORBACHEV, DÉTENTE AND THE LEFT
Michael T. Klare
Tariq Ali
Howard Fast
Michael S. Fox
Alexander Cockburn

BATTLING AIDS AND THE F.D.A.
Mark Gevisser

BRITAIN'S BILL OF RIGHTS
Charter 88

BRAVE NEW LIBERAL LAND
Tom Engelhardt

ELLIS'S 'PLATITUDES'
Eric Lott

A JOURNEY TO POLAND—I

LOOKING FOR A 'HISTORIC COMPROMISE'

DANIEL SINGER

Warsaw

Four drunken Polish youths, four distant, misty figures, acrobatically avoid a fall, then vanish mysteriously into the fog. It was our last evening in Warsaw and the surreal image was richly symbolic. The next morning, I sat opposite a secretary of the Polish Communist Party (P.Z.P.R.) as he pondered aloud the immediate task—the inclusion of the opposition in the socialist system. Poland, ever the pioneer, was once again venturing into uncharted territory. The road, however, was full of pitfalls and characteristically Polish paradoxes.

Two recent waves of strikes, one in April and May and the other in August, awakened the opposition and altered the political climate. The movement, however, had neither the sweep nor the splendor of the famous summer of 1980, and the government was no longer compelled to yield. That it chose nevertheless to negotiate with Lech Walesa, hitherto dismissed as an irrelevant "private person," was a tacit if obvious admission of the bankruptcy of the government's previous line. The reborn labor movement, Solidarity, could not be bypassed this time in any serious drive for economic reform and recovery.

What are the chances of a genuine "historic compromise"? A compromise in this context should be conceived not as a conversion, a match, an alliance between the government and the opposition but rather as a set of mutually acceptable rules of the game, to serve for a given historical period, a game each side would naturally play in the hope of win-

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EXCHANGE.

Gorbachev, Détente & the Left

WILL THE THIRD WORLD BENEFIT?

Amherst, Mass.

I have great respect for Alexander Cockburn's critical analyses of the American press, but I'm afraid to say that I am less impressed with his analysis of superpower dynamics in the Third World. In his scathing and uninformed commentary on a joint U.S.-Soviet statement on ending the cold war ["Beat the Devil," June 4], Cockburn seems to imply that a Soviet pullout from the Third World (as part of a joint U.S.-Soviet nonintervention policy) would be bad for Marxist regimes and national liberation movements. Now, I understand and appreciate where his sympathies lie—with the progressive forces of the Third World. But his comments reveal considerable ignorance of the nature of U.S.-Soviet competition in Third World areas. To wit: First, the major recipients of Soviet arms in the Third World are not Marxist regimes and national liberation forces but authoritarian Arab regimes that have systematically liquidated their internal opposition (whether left or right); second, in many cases the Soviet Union has refused to arm genuine national liberation movements, or has even, in some cases (e.g., Eritrea), armed the wrong side; and third, in any sustained competition to arm Third World forces, the West, with its superior resources and technology, will always be able to outperform the Soviet Union, thus placing Soviet allies at a relative disadvantage (a point that Gorbachev has taken some pain to emphasize in his comments on Soviet relations with the Third World).

Beyond these rather straightforward points are some basic questions of principle:

First, is it, on the whole, beneficial for the Third World for the superpowers to play out their own power struggle there? I would say that the answer is clearly no, even if the left has won some occasional victories. For it has been the introduction of East-West conflict into internal Third World struggles that has led to some of the greatest bloodbaths of modern times, including the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Without cold war justifications, moreover, the U.S. government would find it much more difficult to arm the *contras*, give aid and comfort to the defenders of apartheid or to maintain various Third World dictators in power. If the United States and the Soviet Union were to extricate their own conflict from Third World struggles, therefore, the potential for liberation would increase, not decrease.

Second, is it right and proper for the Soviet Union to assume the white man's burden by bringing a civilizing mission to unruly Third World countries, as Cockburn suggests is needed in the case of Afghanistan? While I agree that the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan could be followed by a bloody civil war, the days are over in which any Northern power, whether sanctified by God or by Marx, can legitimately exercise a paternalistic (that is, imperial) role in the countries of the South.

It seems to me, on final balance, that a mutual U.S.-Soviet nonintervention pact would favor the Third World, not harm it as Cockburn suggests. *Michael T. Klare*

THE AFGHAN TRAGEDY

London

Alexander Cockburn's columns are always a delight and I usually find myself in complete agreement with him. Not, alas, on Afghanistan ["Beat the Devil," June 4 and June 18]. Here are a few points which I hope will make A.C. think again:

1) The events of April 1978 can in no way be described as a revolution. It was, at best, a defensive left-wing coup d'état designed to pre-empt a new wave of repression by Daud.

2) After the seizure of power the P.D.P.A. leaders who had pledged to institute democracy inflicted on this primitive social formation an even more primitive political regime. Afghanistan under both Taraki and Amin was a parody of Kim Il Sung's Korea. The reforms from above could not mobilize the majority of the population. The vicious factional struggles in the P.D.P.A. helped to alienate even the urban alienated layers.

3) The overthrow of Taraki and the rise of Amin accelerated the disastrous trajectory of the regime. The terror which followed provided the biggest boost to the slowly emerging opposition.

4) The Soviet intervention, as has now become public knowledge, was motivated by the international situation (U.S. refusal to do a deal on the missiles) rather than anything in Afghanistan. The Politburo was divided. Gromyko, Grechko and Brezhnev wanted to mimic Washington. Andropov was totally opposed, and for good reasons.

The consequences were catastrophic. The West shored up Zia ul-Haq's dictatorship and poured in money to the fundamentalists. Within Afghanistan it became obvious that the regime had very little real support. It may be irksome, but one cannot deny the Afghans the right to self-determination simply because it is uncomfortable for the left.

5) Some of us argued at the time that this whole business would end as a terrible mess. Thirteen thousand Russian soldiers have been killed for no good reason whatsoever. Analogies with Angola or Nicaragua are off the mark. In one case the F.S.L.N. carried through a popular revolution. In the other South Africa openly invaded the country to create a quisling regime. I agree totally that any concessions on those fronts would be extremely regressive, but Afghanistan is quite different and I would strongly recommend that A.C. read a new book by Raja Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan*, published by Verso.

Though Gorbachev should be criticized for any accommodations he might make in Southern Africa or Central America, what should be understood is that a withdrawal from Afghanistan could strengthen the moral position of the Soviet Union in other parts of the world.

One last thing: Let's not get carried away. To define Brezhnev's policy as "proletarian internationalism" is utterly grotesque. Ask any Czechoslovak socialist. So what's all this emotive stuff about Munich, eh comrade?

Tariq Ali

OUR MAN IN MOSCOW

Redding Ridge, Conn.

In all my years of reading *The Nation*, I have not read a more senseless and petulant article than Cockburn's childish polemic against Mikhail Gorbachev. If it had not appeared in *The Nation*, it would not be worth challenging. Cockburn loves to quote Lenin, so let me say that Lenin has defined positions such as Cockburn takes as "infantile petty-bourgeois leftism."

What does Cockburn call for in this silly and shrill denunciation of Gorbachev? He suggests that to halt the bloody regional conflicts between the United States and the Soviet Union would be a betrayal of socialism. He damns Gorbachev for having a reasonable conversation with Katharine Graham. Would he prefer that Gorbachev cuss her out and denounce her as a wretched capitalist? He cynically recommends Donald Regan's book, and puts more weight on the President's foolishness than on the splendid—and I emphasize the word—achievement of finally, at long last, beginning a process of atomic disarmament. And he bewails the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan.

Cockburn calls with nostalgia for the goals of the 1930s. "Is this where it is all going to end?" he asks, bringing up "the heritage of October, the tradition of Tukhachevsky and Dimitrov." Let me recall another heritage, the heritage of Stalin, the tortures, the beatings, the mass murders, the lunatic and endless killing, the savage orthodoxy that put back the cause of socialism and world peace for generations.

The position Cockburn has taken is not only snide and confusing, it is dangerous. For the first time in my lifetime—a bit longer than Cockburn's—a crack appears in the wall that has separated this country and Russia, not simply détente but a real possibility that a new generation will join our two

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EDITORIALS.

The Beat Goes On

Suddenly the political stage is filled with desperate decrees, cynical vetoes, embarrassed revelations and other wretched works of craven and deceitful men. No sooner were the election results announced than the Reagan-Bush Administration began a series of moves that should have been the stuff of campaign debate, or at least of political accountability. But the convenient limbo of "transition" in the lair of the lame duck makes neither the President nor the President-elect responsible for such drastic démarches as:

§ The executive order transferring authority over nuclear plant evacuation plans from state and local officials to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Gnomes in the White House dropped this baby into a basket of press releases on a Friday night after the national media had retired for the weekend, thus circumventing effective early opposition.

§ Notifications sent to 80,000 farm families that the Administration hopes to foreclose on their mortgages. Letters were sent before the election—to arrive afterward. It may or

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may not be relevant, but Bush won Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, Missouri and the Dakotas—some of the states hardest hit by the farm crisis.

§ An order restricting the rights of old and disabled people to appeal Administration denials of their Social Security, Medicare and welfare benefits. The edict makes a mockery of Bush's promises to "protect" the Social Security system.

§ The brief filed by the Justice Department with the Supreme Court favoring a rehearing and reversal of the *Roe v. Wade* abortion decision. All this before Bush gets his inevitable opportunity to appoint another antichoice Justice.

§ The appointment of a lobbyist for the futures industry to the Securities and Exchange Commission, only one of thirty-two appointments of bureaucrats and diplomats made after Congress recessed. The sleaze factor didn't disappear, it just got put on hold.

§ Vetoes of popular legislation limiting sleaze in government (the ethics bill), promoting bureaucratic *glasnost* (the "whistle-blower" bill) and restricting TV violence directed at kids (see Richard Pollak, page 673). All three bills were passed in the last weeks of the campaign, were responsive to widespread demands from the voters and constitute a "mandate" for action in their areas of concern.

§ The award for the zillion-dollar supercollider project to Texas, and the public coming-out of the megazillion-dollar Stealth weapons system.

§ Announcement that the Federal deficit will be at least $21 billion higher than was previously "estimated."

§ The promulgation of rules for random testing of some 4 million transportation workers for drug "abuse."

§ Removal of restrictions on home work in certain industries, such as textiles. Without strictly enforced guidelines on wages, working conditions and unionization, unregulated home work will increase exploitation, lower living standards and eliminate a century's worth of reforms won by workers—mostly women.

§ The preposterous, hypocritical refusal to let P.L.O. chair Yasir Arafat speak before the United Nations in New York. For Secretary of State George Shultz, this was a retreat to the most intransigent era of Reaganite foreign policy, when Jeane Kirkpatrick and her minions stood against every forward lap of the tide of history.

§ And finally, there is the latest seamy maneuver in the Iran/*contra* saga. On November 30, the White House announced it was putting off-limits the secret documents that Oliver North seeks to use in his legal defense. The Administration insists that the papers are just too sensitive to be noised about in a public trial—national security, you know. If Federal District Judge Gerhard Gesell decides North needs the documents to mount an adequate defense, the White House move could lead to the dropping of important criminal charges not only against him but against his former National Security Council overseer John Poindexter and their two arms-dealing cronies Richard Secord and Albert Hakim.

And that may not be all. There could be at least one surprise still in store for us, a Christmas present that is at the top of George Bush's wish list to Santa. Let's guess: It is something written on paper; it can't be returned; and one size fits all. If it's given, Bush will not have to answer the most damaging (even impeachable) charges hanging over his head. The item, of course, is a pardon for patriots North and Poindexter. Reagan is still equivocating, but there are several shopping days left before Santa retires.

George Bush was widely reported to have approved, or actually concocted, every important Administration action during the campaign: the appointment of three "moderate" Cabinet secretaries, White House consent to the plant-closing bill and the defense of the Navy's attack on an Iranian airliner in the Persian Gulf, which Bush personally argued at the United Nations. So it must be that he knew all the postelection surprises were in the works, that he intervened for their postponement until after November 8 and that he approves of them now. To believe otherwise is to suggest that Ronald Reagan has a mind of his own, which neither journalism nor science can confirm.

Sakharov's Visit

The dissident in Communist society enjoys a unique position of moral authority in the West. To defy the Marxist-Leninist totalitarian state not only entails suffering and requires no small amount of physical courage; defiance also has meaning in a way that political action in the West often does not. In a dissident like Andrei Sakharov, Westerners can glimpse the renewed promise of political life.

That's not to say that embracing the dissident is always idealistic. In November, antiunionist Margaret Thatcher went to Poland to have her picture taken with trade union leader Lech Walesa. At the same time, Sakharov, Nobel laureate and father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, was visiting the United States for the first time. A gaggle of admirers including Senator Edward Kennedy, former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and right-wing polemicist Ernest Lefever competed for his dinner table conversation and political glamour. A group called the International League for Human Rights threw a cocktail party for Sakharov, charged $500 a head and pocketed a nice bit of change.

To be sure, the dissidents profited in their own way from these unlikely meetings. Solidarity used Thatcher's support to pressure Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's regime to come to the bargaining table. Sakharov gained diverse platforms in the United States for promoting much-needed support for *perestroika*. While the Westerners hugged the dissidents primarily to shore up their own legitimacy (is Thatcher really a friend of workers who want to organize for a better standard of living?), Sakharov and Solidarity sought to enhance their political clout, independent of state power. The dissidents were more serious, their cause more urgent.

At several stops, Sakharov had to remind his hosts that his reputation is not a blank check for them to fill in. At a fancy event at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, he threatened to resign from the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity if it did

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not come down out of the clouds and establish a clear agenda. In Washington, he attended a right-wing dinner in honor of Edward Teller, father of the American hydrogen bomb and, more recently, the Strategic Defense Initiative. Sakharov told the 800 Reaganites there that the arms race, whatever its historical justification, menaced the world and that S.D.I. would compound the danger.

As Nicholas Xenos noted in the Summer issue of *Grand Street*, such independence from established political power is the reason dissidents like Sakharov are important to the West. In liberal democracies today, elections often amount to a competition between marketing strategists; office-holding is a test of managerial competence, not political vision. The dissidents of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, Xenos writes, show that "it is in confronting or circumventing the power of the state, rather than in exercising it, that political ethics can still have meaning today."

If Xenos is right, the political ethics of the dissident originates less in hostility to Communism (as the American right would like to believe) than in an adversarial stance toward the centralizing drift of modern politics. "Soviet totalitarianism is an extreme manifestation—a strange, cruel and dangerous species—of a deep-seated problem that also finds expression in advanced Western society," says Vaclav Havel, the Czechoslovak playwright. In Havel's view the challenge is to regain control of the huge military, financial and technological bureaucracies that increasingly dominate life in the developed world.

Sakharov's visit is a reminder that the odds against an ethical individual making a political difference are long but not insurmountable.

Videotic Maniacs

The sale of traditional war toys fell by 45 percent from 1985 to 1987, so there is some cause for rejoicing as we enter this season of acute Christianity. But not much. The sale of toy guns rose by 74 percent last year, from 19 million to 33 million, and a recent study by the National Coalition on Television Violence found that 83 percent of the ninety-five most popular home video games feature violent themes and 58 percent of them are war games.

By the end of the year, children and their doting parents will have dispensed some $2 billion for such television bloodlusts as "Mike Tyson's Punchout," "Rambo" and "Rush 'N Attack" (get it?). This last gives junior the patriotic chance to kill lots of soldiers with his knife, bazookas and hand grenades so he can free American P.O.W.s. Rescuing our P.O.W.s is also the object of "Commando: Aliens of the Evil Empire," reportedly still popular in the White House situation room. "Contra" offers the moral equal of our founding fathers metavideomorphosed into a commando squad eager to terminate the Red Falcon, an alien trying to enslave the earth—whether from Daniel Ortega's basement is not made clear.

Fast food warfare is big too. In "Burgertime," reports the N.C.T.V. study, "the nasty Food Foes are trying to stop Chef Pepper from making his world-famous hamburgers. The player (who has to make burgers with lettuce, tomatoes and cheese while fighting Mr. Hot Dog, Mr. Pickle, and Mr. Egg) is told to hit the 'enemy' with patties or other 'handy ingredients' to put them 'out of the way with *fatal* indigestion.'" You can, of course, achieve such dyspepsia simply by eating a franchiseburger, but this might not be regarded as sporting and could get you labeled Chicken McWimp.

"When I'm playing, I feel like it's me on that screen," says eighth-grader Brian Goss in the November *Boy's Life*, the magazine of the Boy Scouts of America, which appears to regard all this TV mayhem as just good fun, like roasting marshmallows around a campfire. Young Brian is president of his local players club, named (prophetically?) Videotic Maniacs, and like millions of his peers spends hours each week hypnotized by the screen, boxing with Tyson, piloting military attack jets and fighting as a Ninja warrior.

Does all this fantasy really cause any harm? Yes, says N.C.T.V., which during the past year charted "Captain Power," a video game played by 8- to 10-year-olds who shoot interactive laser weapons at the "enemy" on the TV set. The coalition found an 80 percent increase in fighting on school playgrounds immediately after kids finished their zapfests. N.C.T.V. also notes that 116 deaths have now been linked to "Dungeons & Dragons," and that twenty research studies have shown that "the viewing of boxing and sports fighting results in an increased tendency to anger and loss of temper in normal adult and adolescent viewers."

Periodically, those with a big financial stake in our Hobbesian proclivities, like the video game industry and the TV networks, roll out studies of their own claiming to demonstrate that the effect of television violence can't be proved. The implication here is that the issue is meaningless unless we know the exact number of noses punched in Nielson households after an evening of prime-time slugouts and gunfire. Meanwhile, the television set flickers more than seven hours a day in the average home and the kiddies sit before it stoned while education crumbles and life in America grows nastier and more brutish.

True, *Sesame Street* began its twentieth season on public television in November. But commercial TV is a vaster wasteland for children than ever, with not a single regularly scheduled weekday program. And as a parting shot, our telepresident recently pocket-vetoed a bill, overwhelmingly approved by Congress, that would have put an end to toy commercials parading as children's programs and limited the amount of advertising permitted during children's shows in general. The erstwhile General Electric pitchman selectively invoked the First Amendment in dispatching the legislation, and civil libertarians are, in fact, divided on the issue. But however valid the First Amendment argument, it does not excuse the broadcasters' cynical and base programming.

This topic, of course, is unlikely to get much air time on television. So pop in another video game, kids. "Here Comes Santa Claws," perhaps.

RICHARD POLLAK

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Call It Fog (or Sleep)

The Sunday before Thanksgiving, fog hung over Aptos, more specifically the Adobe Motel, in which I am lodged. Fog always hangs over the Adobe. Move a few yards to the left or right and Northern California sunshine sparkles down. It was different once. Fog hung over Capitola. Then came atom tests, a shift in El Niño, the cutting down of the Amazonian rain forest, planetary heat-up, the Dukakis campaign and, with them all, fog.

Fogbound, I read *The New York Times*. R.W. Apple Jr. announced with great excitement on the front page that George Bush has "signaled" Republican leaders and something Apple knowingly calls "the broader political community" that he intends "to adopt a much more energetic and more deeply involved Presidential style than that of the man he has served under for eight years, Ronald Reagan."

They pay Apple to tell us this? Simply by getting out of bed in the morning Bush will display deeper involvement in the diurnal round than a man whose idea of a major political initiative is to switch on the television set; whose torpor has been so palpable, so Oblomovian, that halfway through his second term senior aides contemplated use of the Twenty-fifth Amendment to prise him out of bed and office. But I'm not sure that Bush's determination to get to his desk before noon will be popular. People liked Reagan's rigorous schedule of long lie-in, midmorning nap, post-prandial snooze, forty winks over the TV dinner and early bed. It meant less chance for him to do something stupid.

Darkness and Noon, Part I

I drove to San Francisco that day to speak at a fund-raiser on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of *The Guardian*. As I entered the hall a bit late, a speaker was lathering up the crowd with a prospectus of George Bush's impending villainies. He painted a grim future, but one not nearly so grim as that drawn by the New Right, to whom Bush has come as a godsend. Viguerie & Co. can now send out mailing after mailing urging the faithful to send dollars to beat back the schemes and sellouts of this Trilateralist hellspawn of Nelson Rockefeller.

Back in late 1979, while in the stimulating business of covering with Jim Ridgeway the Florida straw poll of Republican candidates, I was approached by a bulky Florida businessman who delivered himself thus:

> George Bush is a member of the Trilateral Commission. The Trilateral Commission controls and orchestrates what happens in the world. George Bush represents nothing but the elitists, the people who are going to control the entire world. George Bush's son called me the other day. He said, "Can you support my father?" and I said, "Marvin, is he a member of the Trilateral Commission?" He said, "Er . . . er . . ." and I said, "Is he a member or has he ever been?" and he said, "Yes, he has been, and he just resigned three weeks ago." And I said, "Marvin, you have my answer. Your father cannot in the strictest sense represent this country in any other context but how it will affect his or the United States' place in the total divine plan orchestrated by the people who control this world."

My beef with the left is that too much time has been spent lately messing with small-time conspiracy plots, like the Secret Team or the October Surprise. We need to get to more spacious analysis of the schemes of the Masters of Capital, with the vigor of this affluent cracker.

John Trinkl, who introduced me at the *Guardian* event, was kind enough to quote a letter from Cedric Belfrage, one of the founders of *The National Guardian*, saying that a major influence in urging him to start the paper had been my father, Claud. It was one of those weeks where the old boy's name kept popping up. Someone had just sent me a silly piece from *The Village Voice* making the rather belated discovery that he was one and the same as Frank Pitcairn, foe of St. George (Orwell) and POUM (along with the Kronstadt mutiny one of the most romanticized movements in political history). Anyone wanting a dose of realism about POUM should read Luis Buñuel's reminiscences.

Also in my pocket at that meeting was a speech by Steve Nelson, commander of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, on the dedication of artist Roy Schriffrin's Barcelona Monument to the International Brigades, October 28. Among other things Nelson said this:

> There is . . . another monument, the one in Bitburg, Germany, on which President Reagan placed a wreath. . . . Two days after his homage to this Nazi monument, President Reagan came to Spain. He said that the Lincoln Brigaders and others who fought for the Republic were on the wrong side. . . .
>
> This monument standing before us represents the right of all people to determine their own destiny, for a democratic rule of their own choice. When the governments of the Western democracies chose to sit on their hands as bleeding Spain called for help, it was the common people who said, We cannot be neutral. Many who were released or who escaped from the hell of fascist prisons found a way to reach Spain. Some 45,000 men and women from fifty-three countries rushed to aid the Republic and said, We are with you. More than 10,000 lie in the soil of Spain. In the words of Ernest Hemingway, "No men ever entered earth more honorably than those who died in Spain."

Darkness and Noon, Part II

Today's echo of that rush to support the Republic has been solidarity with and assistance to Nicaragua, and Brigade veterans have been among the most active. Market Central, happy to see the young Republic die then, now yearns for a similar end to the revolution in Nicaragua. The miseries being endured there in the aftermath of Hurricane Joan come as a joy to Washington. The storm that struck Nicaragua on October 22 left 122 people dead, 182 seriously injured and 227,697 homeless. Emergency evacuation procedures designed in the event of a U.S. invasion kept the death rate relatively low. The storm ruined 400 miles of road and 105 bridges, and caused direct economic damage of $828 mil-

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

lion. Additional losses in timber come to $1.6 billion; in coconut trees, to $360 million. On the Atlantic Coast the fishing industry is virtually destroyed, the palm oil business is finished and 80 percent of the rice fields have been wiped out. Food shortages are expected for at least ten months, and the devastation of tens of thousands of square miles of rain forest could change Nicaragua's environment forever.

In response to this catastrophe, Cuba has sent twenty-six airlifts of relief aid and has pledged to provide the material and personnel to build 1,000 housing units. Emergency assistance has come from elsewhere in Latin America (Mexico sent twelve tons of milk, medicine and food) and from Canada, Eastern and Western Europe, the Soviet Union and the United Nations. Thatcher's Britain managed just $358,000 in material aid.

The United States has offered nothing, and according to *Barricada*, the Voice of America even campaigned against aid from the international community. The *contras*, meanwhile, took advantage of the desperate situation, attacking relief vehicles loaded with supplies and ambushing a transportation vehicle, killing nine of its fifteen passengers.

Anyone still skeptical about the United States' use of relief aid as a political weapon should recall that when the earthquake leveled Managua in 1972, U.S. aid to the Somoza government—$10.6 million worth—was swift. Two years later, after Somoza's "re-election," the United States and the international banks provided $127 million more in loans, most of it ending up in the pockets of Somoza and his friends. When Hurricane Gilbert hit Jamaica in September, the United States immediately offered the Seaga government $125 million in food and medical supplies. It is doubtful such largesse would have been forthcoming if Michael Manley were president, particularly as the Nixon Administration ended all bilateral lending to Jamaica after Manley's 1972 election, in what one U.S. official called "an effort to cut Jamaica off at the knees."

And the response of the people? Quest for Peace (Hurricane Relief Fund, Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782) has sent $6 million in material aid. Nicaragua Network has collected more than $100,000 and will be sending three coffee brigades and two construction brigades over the next several months. (Checks should be made out to Let Nicaragua Live/HAND, 2025 I Street N.W., Suite 212, Washington, DC 20006.) Oxfam America (115 Broadway, Boston, MA 02116) is studying the extent of the damage and working with local Nicaraguan groups on infrastructure repair and housing construction. It has raised $100,000 and is appealing for $400,000 more. In total thus far, U.S. citizens have given more than $12 million in material aid and have provided about $750,000 for delivery and other costs.

What of the press? Generally speaking it downplayed the calamity. And on October 25 a *Washington Post* editorialist declared that the Sandinistas were "using the hurricane for purposes of political mobilization. But the hurricane has passed. The enduring reality is that the demise of the contras leaves Nicaraguans with no one to blame for their misery but a regime less interested in people than power."

EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 670*)

countries with China and begin the process of civilization. It is like two great peoples beginning to laugh together for the first time, a joyous, joyous occasion. The most reactionary and dangerous elements in America are already damning it and pleading with us not to be taken in by the Gorbachev charm. How very sad to see Cockburn joining them!

One more note: Not only does Cockburn bring me back to the days of my youth and a Communist Party so narrow and knuckleheaded that it destroyed itself as a willing gift to Truman and the F.B.I., but I am sure that whatever splinters of that party still exist toast Cockburn's denunciation of Gorbachev.

Howard Fast

HERO WORSHIP

New Haven, Conn.

It is a sad day when Alexander Cockburn lauds Leonid Brezhnev for his championship of "exemplary acts of proletarian internationalism" ["Beat the Devil," June 4]. Cockburn, the advanced industrial proletariat of Afghanistan thanks you in its struggle to build socialism. Even sadder is Cockburn's enthusiasm for Brezhnev's stewardship over "relatively speaking, a golden age for the Soviet working class." This statement takes the prize for best qualifier.

Perhaps saddest of all is Cockburn's castigation of Gorbachev's foreign policy moderation as a betrayal of the internationalist "tradition of Tukachevsky (*sic*) and Dimitrov." This is the same Dimitrov, of course, who became General Secretary of the Comintern at the Seventh Comintern Congress of 1935, just as Comintern adulation of Stalin reached unprecedented heights; who built his career on anti-Fascism just until the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact, at which point he established the new Comintern policy of soft-pedaling Nazi aggression, avoiding criticism of Hitler and justifying the invasion of Poland; and who obediently ordered the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, when it was no longer useful for Soviet foreign policy.

Even more puzzling as a model is Tukhachevsky. Does Cockburn honor him for his role in the failed war against Poland in 1920, or his leadership in the suppression of the Kronstadt commune in 1921, or his restructuring of the Red Army along lines of rigid hierarchy and stratification in 1935-36?

Genuine internationalism has been better served by others. *Michael S. Fox*

COCKBURN REPLIES

Aptos, Calif.

For a time I thought I'd managed the historic feat of uniting the entire American left, or what passes for it, in opposition to my remarks about Soviet foreign policy and the sad shadow of Sadat. A prominent feature of many letters I received, aside from those published here, was incomprehension that just when a "good" Soviet leader came on the scene I should piss in his boots. This outrage abuts on a Gorby cult (or in Fast's case a Gorby-Reagan cult), and my midsummer joke that if Ligachev was bundled off to Siberia Gorbachev's champions would hail it as a triumph for the "new thinking" was not so wide of the mark.

It's easy enough to trash Brezhnev, but the

(*Continued on Page 699*)

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN AND JEFFERSON MORLEY

■ Quayle's Favorite Liberal

Does Vice President-elect Dan Quayle know he has a fellow traveler on his staff? Five years ago Jeff Nesbit was the editor of *Public Citizen*, the magazine of Ralph Nader's group by the same name. At that time Nesbit was also a freelance contributor to *In These Times*, the independent socialist weekly. These days Nesbit can be found at Quayle's side, as his press secretary.

"It was a slow evolution," Nesbit told us. Not especially. Less than four years after leaving Nader's shop he walked into a job interview with Quayle. At that meeting Quayle's first remark was "So, you used to work for Ralph Nader," Nesbit remembers. Although by the time he left Public Citizen he had become pro-nuclear, Nesbit says he still supports the consumer advocacy work of Nader's Health Research Group and admires Public Citizen's fight for workplace safety. Holding these views, he maintains, is not inconsistent with his duties as mouthpiece for Quayle. (Nesbit must have forgotten that his current boss voted last spring against a major occupational safety bill.) What had disenchanted him most at Public Citizen, he said, was "the simplistic Nader mindset: the world is just bad guys and good guys."

Quayle, a sophisticated thinker, wasn't scared off by Nesbit's L-word pedigree. But did Quayle ask about Nesbit's contributions to a socialist weekly? No. Did Nesbit feel he should tell him? No. "He generally knew what I had done," says Nesbit, who is waiting to see if he will be named to Quayle's vice presidential team. A reminder: Before Marlin Fitzwater became presidential press secretary, he warmed up as the veep's spokesman.

■ New York Is Such a Sick Town

Here's the Edvard Munch-inspired poster that's popping up all over Washington, illustrating the city's bipartisan consensus about the boy Vice President. In the harsher climate of New York, artistic interpreters of the Quayle phenomenon prefer to work in a conceptual style that some critics describe as minimalist, others as felonious. A black-and-white poster spied at the corner of Seventh Avenue and 16th Street says, "MURDER DAN QUAYLE IN COLD BLOOD."

■ Nuts in the North

The growing intimacy between the United States and Canada as symbolized by the free trade pact was first imagined twenty-three years ago, in a Washington novel called *Night of Camp David* in which the President of the United States goes insane. The first sign of President Mark Hollenbach's dementia is his proposal to unify Canada and the United States. "We and Canada have every reason to combine for our mutual strength and profit," the smooth but wacko Prez declares privately, "and only rabid nationalism, customs, and outworn modes of thinking prevent it. . . . Most Americans and Canadians will be for it in another decade." *Night of Camp David* was published in 1965, so the crazed Commander in Chief was off in his prediction by only thirteen years.

What was once considered presidential nuttiness is now the soul of conventional wisdom. Barrie Dunsmore, the ABC-TV correspondent, asserted on the eve of the recent Canadian elections that a victory for the free trade pact would prove that Canadians "feel they are mature enough to retain their identity without resorting to the Yankee-bashing of some of America's less sophisticated neighbors." In 1965 you were bonkers if you supported the idea; in 1988 you're a primitive Third Worlder if you don't.

■ Singlaub in the Dock (Again)

Although he won the first round against the Christic Institute, retired Gen. John Singlaub just can't shake messy lawsuits. A suit filed in Federal court in Miami recently named him as a participant in a scheme to loot a Miami bank for the *contras*. According to the allegation, the Miami Bayshore Bank failed because in 1985 it transferred approximately $5 million to GeoMiliTech so the firm could buy weapons for the *contras*. GeoMiliTech is run by radio talk show host turned arms dealer Barbara Studley; Singlaub, a close friend of Studley, has been a consultant to the company. The bank's stockholders, who are bringing the suit, claim that none of the money was ever repaid. Singlaub's attorney maintains there's nothing to the charge. But Alan Kluger, the lawyer for the stockholders, says that in 1987 Studley agreed to pay back $2 million and then withdrew the offer. Her attorney did not return our call.

■ K.A.L. 007 Trial Still Flies

For K.A.L. 007 conspiracy theorists, there's good news. Last month a Federal judge ruled there was sufficient evidence of "willful misconduct" on the part of the flight's crew to merit a trial on the issue. Judge Aubrey E. Robinson Jr., who is presiding over a civil lawsuit filed by relatives of passengers on the flight, which was shot down by the Russians in 1983, noted there is substantial evidence that the crew knew it was flying over the Soviet Union. But even better news is contained in a court filing submitted by Park Yong Man, the Korean Air Lines pilot who at the time of the downing was flying a companion K.A.L. plane. In the document, Park admits that after he retired from the airline, K.A.L. continued to pay him in exchange for keeping quiet about Flight 007. "Given the fact that I was paid by Korean Air Lines for about eight months for doing nothing at all, coupled with heavy coaching I received from Korean attorneys about answering delicate questions 'I don't know,' 'I can't remember,' and 'too long ago' . . . I understood that I was being asked to assist Korean Air Lines in evading and hiding the truth," Park asserted. Park's statement, though, doesn't say what truth he was hiding.

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ARTICLES.

BATTLING THE F.D.A.

AIDS Movement Seizes Control

MARK GEVISSER

France's Minister of Health called the abortion pill recently approved in his country the "moral property" of women, not just the property of the drug company that makes it. That no U.S. public health official has taken a similar stand on behalf of AZT, this country's only approved antiviral AIDS drug, is a measure of how foreign the term "moral property" is to the U.S. drug development nexus. But the 45,000 AIDS deaths to date in the United States have finally forced a debate that cuts to the heart of this society's dollar-oriented medical philosophy by focusing increased attention on the Food and Drug Administration, the agency that must approve all drug treatments before they may be marketed.

The AIDS movement, a burgeoning coalition of health care practitioners and mostly gay activists has persistently challenged what it regards as the weak and ineffective role of the F.D.A., a role recently abetted by President-elect George Bush. Scarcely three weeks before his election, in his capacity as chair of President Reagan's Task Force on Regulatory Relief, Bush recommended streamlining the F.D.A.'s approval process for drugs that treat life-threatening conditions. The result, informally dubbed the "Bush initiative," has now been implemented by the agency as an interim rule and codifies the expedited procedure by which AZT was tested and released in 1987.

The F.D.A. touted the Bush initiative as proof of its commitment to help people with AIDS. "The procedures," says Commissioner Frank Young, "reflect a recognition that physicians and patients are generally willing to accept greater risks or side effects from products that treat life-threatening diseases." Young claims that the new plan shows "that F.D.A. is not 'part of the problem' but an integral, aggressive part of the solution to AIDS and other diseases."

Yet most doctors, legislators and AIDS activists are skeptical. Representative Ted Weiss, chair of the House Human Resources Subcommittee, called the initiative "a politically timed restatement of what the F.D.A. already can and does do"; and Dr. Mathilde Krim, co-founder and chair of the American Foundation for Aids Research (AmFAR), got to the cynical root of the initiative when she said that "without significant dollars, these proposals constitute a public relations ploy . . . by the Administration in the closing weeks of the presidential campaign."

Mark Harrington is a member of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), the organization that has spearheaded the attack on the Bush initiative and the F.D.A. He is a gay man in his 20s who has made it his business to know all there is to know about the drug approval process in this country. "We want the drug companies to be more accountable to the public, not less," says Harrington, who argues that the F.D.A. is not nearly tough enough on the pharmaceutical firms.

At present, a drug must pass successfully through three phases of clinical (human) trials before it is approved. The first phase tests safety and dosage levels; the second, safety and efficacy; and the third, further efficacy by expanding the trial to a wider range of subjects over a longer period of time. The whole process takes eight to ten years, three times the average remaining life span of a person infected with HIV, the AIDS virus.

The Bush initiative, when fully effective, could lop three to five years off this process by eliminating the third phase of clinical testing. To compensate for this it proposes heightening F.D.A. consultation with the drug companies and Federal institutions performing the trials. Commissioner Young has stated, however, that only 20 percent of the drug companies consult with the F.D.A., and the initiative offers little incentive for reluctant firms to increase such communication. And even if the F.D.A. is sincere in its proposal to oversee the trials more closely, where, Harrington asks, "are they going to get the resources to do this? There are neither funds nor staff positions to do what they must do now, let alone [carry out] the Bush initiative."

There are many other problems inherent in the agency's approval process that the new regulations do not address,

DRAWINGS BY J-C SUARES

Mark Gevisser is a freelance writer who teaches the humanities in a New York City public high school.

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and ACT UP argues that "the F.D.A. has the power under existing laws and regulations to change direction and provide many of our demands immediately." For this reason, the agency has become the focal point of AIDS activists: On October 11, 1,000 demonstrators converged on its headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, chanting, "WE'RE THE EXPERTS, LET US IN!" In a tightly orchestrated civil disobedience, they managed to shut the agency down for the day. "As people who have been struck by AIDS, we've had to seize control of our own treatment—the government isn't doing it for us," says Gregg Bordowitz of the Aids Coalition to Network, Organize and Win (ACT NOW), the national coalition of AIDS organizations that planned the action.

At present, people infected with HIV have one obvious treatment option: They may obtain a doctor's prescription and buy AZT. But many bodies cannot tolerate the drug's toxicity, and many pocketbooks cannot afford its cost, which can run as high as $800 a month. Moreover, the efficacy of AZT has been repeatedly questioned. So those infected with HIV often attempt to seize control by pursuing one of three other options: enrolling in the clinical trials of an experimental treatment; gaining access to unapproved experimental treatments that have been released through F.D.A.-monitored programs; or resorting to what has become known as the underground market.

The F.D.A. regulates all these options and is thus, according to ACT UP, "at the crux of virtually every issue concerning treatments for AIDS." Jim Eigo, a member of the ACT UP issues committee and one of the principal architects of the organization's demands, says the central problem is that "the F.D.A. refuses to see experimental medicine as health care." The agency's mandate is to protect consumers from treatments that might be unsafe or ineffective. This mandate requires the F.D.A. to protect sick people from getting sicker, to do everything within its power to help people with life-threatening conditions obtain treatments that might help them.

To its credit, the F.D.A. has finally turned a blind eye to the underground market: After AIDS activists complained repeatedly about crackdowns on drug buyers' groups, the agency decided in July to allow those with life-threatening conditions to bring unapproved drugs into the country for personal use. While this might help patients with the resources to find out about drugs used abroad and with the funds to import them, it doesn't address the needs of the thousands of HIV-infected i.v. drug users who, already on the margins of society, have difficulty obtaining even the most basic medical services.

The F.D.A. has also recently initiated a program designed to make available experimental drugs that have passed the first phase of the agency's testing process to people outside the clinical trials. This program, called Treatment I.N.D. (investigational new drug), has such narrowly defined entry criteria, however, that only ninety people gained access to one drug recently being tested. And again, only those better connected and better off benefit, for the treatments require close supervision by a physician and are not covered by private insurance or Medicaid. The drug companies, which have the final say as to whether their products enter the F.D.A. programs, resent the Treatment I.N.D. program because it draws potential subjects away from the clinical trials. The firms also complain that selling unapproved drugs leaves them more vulnerable to liability suits.

The last option available to a person with AIDS who can neither afford to import drugs nor gain access to I.N.D. programs is to enroll in a clinical trial. There are presently experimental trials for 80 potential AIDS treatments, 60 percent of which are run by private companies and 40 percent by the National Institutes of Health. All operational plans of these drug trials have to be reviewed and approved by the F.D.A. It is in the trials that the experimental medicine versus health care issue comes to a head.

The F.D.A. has traditionally recommended the use of placebos in drug trials—even in those that involve subjects with life-threatening conditions. In a typical placebo-control trial, half the subjects will be treated with medicine, the other half with an inert substance that has no curative powers. The scientific establishment regards this methodology as the cleanest, most effective means of research. AIDS activists argue, however, that placebos might be acceptable in the testing of a drug like aspirin, but their use on subjects who are at risk of death is unconscionable.

Jim Eigo of ACT UP says, "We've always argued against placebo control for ethical reasons, [but now] we have a practical argument—that these experiments actually impede research and testing." He tells of three major trials that have collapsed in the past few months because "people won't put their lives on the line, thus the trials cannot accrue patients and have to close." And if HIV-infected people do enter trials, he adds, "they try to protect themselves by taking every antiviral drug on the black market, so researchers are beginning to realize the data is unclean."

The F.D.A. will only forgo placebos if there is an effective substance available to substitute as a control. In its regulations, however, the agency lists four alternative methods to the use of placebos, and ACT UP's researchers favor one of those, the use of experimental substances against each other. The F.D.A. is unwilling to recommend this, though, because it contends its primary aim is to facilitate the testing of drugs, not provide treatment, and "placebo-controlled trials are the fastest way to find out if

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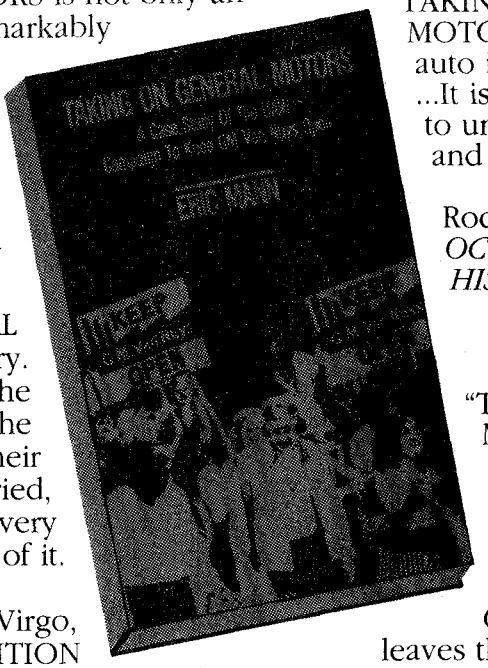

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an experimental drug is effective against a disease with no known cure."

The activists also are challenging the F.D.A. on the way the drug trial process treats women and i.v. drug users. The latter and their sexual partners are the group in which the HIV infection rate is currently the highest, yet they are systematically excluded from trials. There are often good reasons for this: The users may still be infusing vast quantities of methadone, heroin or other substances into their systems. But most trials will not accept even former users or sexual partners because, administrators say, these people are recalcitrant, unreliable and manipulative. ACT UP's Margaret McCarthy, who works with New York City's AIDS discrimination unit, counters that "in trials done in Brooklyn, people who are and have been drug users have a very good record of cooperation." Women are also often excluded for fear that experimental treatments might cause fetal damage. To bar women of childbearing age from AIDS trials is absurd, says McCarthy, when official city figures show that AIDS is the number-one killer of women between the ages of 25 and 39 in the city.

As with the placebo issue, the activists are demanding equal access to trials not only for reasons of justice and humanity but also out of concern for scientific accuracy. AZT, for example, was not tested at all on i.v. drug users, who are now proving to be highly intolerant of the drug. AIDS activists say that populations should be excluded from drug trials only if there is a demonstrable scientific reason to set up a homogenous test group. And if this is the case, parallel trials for other groups must be mandated.

The F.D.A. is frustrated by the activists' relentless criticism: "At the same time they complain about the slow release of some drugs," said spokesman Don McLaren, "they complain about lax standards surrounding AZT." The agency also repeatedly makes the point that there are simply no promising treatments at present, and that, in the face of this fact, all it can do is pursue the Bush initiative.

Such a response, ignoring the breadth of the AIDS activists' demands, is grossly inadequate. What is at stake in this confrontation is not only the release of promising drugs but the course public health is to take in this country, for the activists are posing profound questions about the relationship between private drug companies, Federal agencies and people in desperate need of treatment.

In an attempt to answer these questions, George Bush and Frank Young could have followed the lead of Admiral James Watkins and his unheeded President's Commission on AIDS. They could have listened to the AIDS activists and health care practitioners who are on the front line of this epidemic. They could have proposed sweeping structural reforms for the drug approval process and increased resources for the sorely tried institutions (like the F.D.A. itself) that are bearing the brunt of the work. Instead, they did no more than apply an election-eve layer of make-up. And the reason is devastatingly obvious: Drug development in this country has yet to find that balance—balance that determines humanity in a capitalist society—between profit and moral obligation. □

CHARTER 88

A Bill of Rights For Britain

When the United States became independent, it enshrined its democratic freedoms in a Constitution and a Bill of Rights. Britain was different: Since 1688 it has been governed by an unwritten set of rules. Recent assaults on the rights of the British have made it apparent how fragile this arrangement has always been. Margaret Thatcher's authoritarianism has come to embody the problem, even if it was her Labor Party predecessors who began the trend.

Each new display of centralized power has gagged or trampled another minority constituency. The shooting of three I.R.A. terrorists in Gibraltar revealed the potential for the state to act as executioner, without restraint. Press and television have come under frontal attack, as has the autonomy of local elected bodies like the Greater London Council. And Section 28, which forbids the "promotion of homosexuality" by local authorities, is the latest guise for the bigotry that has seeped into the land.

An informal group of British intellectuals has spoken for some time now of the need for "popular sovereignty." They see two choices: to hope that Thatcherism is a ghastly aberration, after which life will revert to "normal," or to respond to the originality of her politics with an equally innovative alternative, a new politics from below. This means acknowledging that there is no sense in arguing over the contours of tomorrow until the unfinished business of yesterday has been attended to.

On December 1, under the name Charter 88, more than 200 signatories—journalists and academics, judges and novelists—published their demands in The New Statesman and Society *and* The Guardian. *—The Editors*

CHARTER 88

In Britain we have been brought up to believe that we are free: that our Parliament is the mother of democracy; that our liberty is the envy of the world; that our system of justice is always fair; that the guardians of our safety, the police and security services, are subject to democratic, legal control; that our civil service is impartial; that our cities and communities maintain a proud identity; that our press is brave and honest.

Today such beliefs are increasingly implausible. The gap between reality and the received ideas of Britain's "unwritten constitution" has widened to a degree that many find hard to endure. Yet this year we are invited to celebrate the third centenary of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, which established what was to become the United Kingdom's sovereign formula. In the name of freedom, our political, human and social rights are being curtailed while the powers of the executive have increased, are increasing and ought to be diminished.

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A process is underway which endangers many of the freedoms we have had. Only in part deliberate, it began before 1979 and is now gathering momentum. Scotland is governed like a province from Whitehall. More generally, the government has eroded a number of important civil freedoms; for example, the universal rights to habeas corpus, to peaceful assembly, to freedom of information, to freedom of expression, to membership of a trade union, to local government, to freedom of movement, even to the birth-right itself. By taking these rights from some the government puts them at risk for all.

A traditional British belief in the benign nature of the country's institutions encourages an unsystematic perception of these grave matters; each becomes an "issue" considered in isolation from the rest. Being unwritten the constitution also encourages a piecemeal approach to politics; an approach that gives little protection against a determined, authoritarian state. For the events of 1688 only shifted the absolute power of the monarch into the hands of the parliamentary oligarchy.

The current administration is not an un-English interruption in the country's way of life. But while the government calls upon aspirations for liberty, it also exploits the dark side of a constitutional settlement which was always deficient in democracy.

The 1688 settlement had a positive side. In its time the Glorious Revolution was a historic victory over Royal tyranny. Britain was spared the rigours of dictatorship. A working compromise between many different interests was made possible at home, even if, from Ireland to India, quite different standards were imposed by Empire abroad. No criticism of contemporary developments in Britain should deny the significance of past democratic achievements, most dramatically illuminated in May 1940 when Britain defied the fascist domination of Europe.

But the eventual victory that liberated Western Europe preserved the paternalist attitudes and institutions of the United Kingdom. These incorporated the popular desire for work and welfare into a post-war national consensus. Now this has broken down. So, too, have its conventions of compromise and tolerance: essential components of a free society. Instead, the inbuilt powers of the 1688 settlement have enabled the government to discipline British society to its ends; to impose its values on the civil service; to menace the independence of broadcasting; to threaten academic freedom in the universities and schools; to tolerate abuses committed in the name of national security. The break with the immediate past shows how vulnerable Britain has always been to elective dictatorship. The consequence is that today the British have fewer legal rights and less democracy than many other West Europeans.

The intensification of authoritarian rule in the United Kingdom has only recently begun. The time to reverse the process is now, but it cannot be reversed by an appeal to the past. Three hundred years of unwritten rule from above are enough. Britain needs a democratic programme that will end unfettered control by the executive of the day. It needs to reform a Parliament in which domination of the lower

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house can be decided by fewer than 40 percent of the population; a Parliament in which a majority of the upper house is still determined by inheritance.

We have had less freedom than we believed. That which we have enjoyed has been too dependent on the benevolence of our rulers. Our freedoms have remained their possession, rationed out to us as subjects rather than being our own inalienable possession as citizens. To make real the freedoms we once took for granted means for the first time to take them for ourselves.

The time has come to demand political, civil and human rights in the United Kingdom. The first step is to establish them in constitutional form, so that they are no longer subject to the arbitrary diktat of Westminster and Whitehall.

WE CALL, therefore, for a new constitutional settlement which would:

ENSHRINE, by means of a Bill of Rights, such civil liberties as the right to peaceful assembly, to freedom of association, to freedom from discrimination, to freedom from detention without trial, to trial by jury, to privacy and to freedom of expression.

SUBJECT executive powers and prerogatives, by whomsoever exercised, to the rule of law.

ESTABLISH freedom of information and open government.

CREATE a fair electoral system of proportional representation.

REFORM the upper house to establish a democratic, nonhereditary second chamber.

PLACE the executive under the power of a democratically renewed parliament and all agencies of the state under the rule of law.

ENSURE the independence of a reformed judiciary.

PROVIDE legal remedies for all abuses of power by the state and the officials of central and local government.

GUARANTEE an equitable distribution of power between local, regional and national government.

DRAW UP a written constitution, anchored in the idea of universal citizenship, that incorporates these reforms.

Our central concern is the law. No country can be considered free in which the government is above the law. No democracy can be considered safe whose freedoms are not encoded in a basic constitution.

We, the undersigned, have called this document Charter 88. First, to mark our rejection of the complacency with which the tercentenary of the Revolution of 1688 has been celebrated. Second, to reassert a tradition of demands for constitutional rights in Britain, which stretches from the barons who forced the Magna Carta on King John, to the working men who drew up the People's Charter in 1838, to the women at the beginning of this century who demanded universal suffrage. Third, to salute the courage of those in Eastern Europe who still fight for their fundamental freedoms.

Like the Czech signatories of Charter 77, we are an informal, open community of people of different opinions, faiths and professions, united by the will to strive, individually and collectively, for the respect of civil and human rights in our own country and throughout the world. Charter 77 welcomed the accession of Czechoslovakia to the Helsinki Agreement in 1977, but noted that it "serves as a reminder of the extent to which basic human rights in our country exist, regrettably, on paper only."

Conditions here are so much better than in Eastern Europe as to bear no comparison. But our rights in the United Kingdom remain unformulated, conditional upon the goodwill of the government and the compassion of bureaucrats. To create a democratic constitution at the end of the twentieth century, however, may extend the concept of liberty, especially with respect to the rights of women and the place of minorities. It will not be a simple matter: part of British sovereignty is shared with Europe; and the extension of social rights in a modern economy is a matter of debate everywhere. We cannot foretell the choices a free people may make. We are united in one opinion only, that British society stands in need of a constitution which protects individual rights and of the institutions of a modern and pluralist democracy.

The inscription of laws does not guarantee their realisation. Only people themselves can ensure freedom, democracy and equality before the law. Nonetheless, such ends can be far better demanded, and more effectively obtained and guarded, once they

BELONG TO US BY INALIENABLE RIGHT □

THE 'CANADIAN STRATAGEM'

How to Create a Land of Liberals

TOM ENGELHARDT

Is there hope for a liberal America? Two Canadian political scientists, Martin Sheldon and Arthur Drake, of the University of Saskatchewan at Moose Jaw, hold out a glimmer to "L-worders" cowering in stunned silence in coastal and northern enclaves of the United States. However, their analysis—if correct—also spells ultimate success for U.S. conservatives.

Sheldon and Drake's 345-page report, *The New Realignment: Political Realities for North America in the 1990s*, was issued last July by Canada's prestigious Institute for Strategic Surveys (I.S.S.) in Toronto. Its title may sound bland, but the report makes explosive reading.

While U.S. political commentators argued about whether Michael Dukakis could take states ranging from Georgia and Texas to Ohio and California, Sheldon and Drake assumed that the Democratic nominee would, with the ex-

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ceptions of Oregon, Iowa and Rhode Island, win only a series of states bordering on or close to Canada—specifically, Massachusetts, New York, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Washington. "It's true," says Sheldon, "that Dukakis lost the U.S. election, but looked at in another light, he won the southern Canadian election, and it's this political reality that liberals and leftists should be facing and debating on both sides of the border." Dukakis's victories, Sheldon and Drake point out, fall roughly north of the old British claim-line for the Canadian border in the West. They believe that this particular configuration of states, which they call "the Northern Tier," is no fluke of history.

As evidence that this "Canadian stratagem" has been consciously engineered, Sheldon and Drake cite the private comments of scores of Democratic politicos. Typically, one close Dukakis aide confided to them: "Someday, we'll have a few things to teach Canadian liberals about how to run a country." They also highlight a comment, unreported in the United States, that President-elect Bush made during the New Hampshire primary. Sitting by a radio microphone he thought was switched off, he turned to a New Hampshire supporter and said of the Democrats, "One more push and we'll have them in Canada."

From their pre-election analysis of the developing situation on both sides of the border, Sheldon and Drake conclude that we may be facing the first political and economic restructuring of North America since the American Revolution. In a chapter titled "The Northern Tier: Co-evolution or Chaos?" they suggest that the only way Canadian liberals and leftists can take on the historical task of guarding Canada's fragile economic independence—symbolized in their recent attempts to hold back the U.S.-Canada free trade treaty—is by incorporating the part of the United States that clearly is no longer wanted.

The result—a Greater Canadian Commonwealth—if achieved without acrimony, would offer both countries enormous advantages. Canada would be thrown solidly into the "L" column, an economic giant able to coexist with its southern neighbor without fear of domination. At the same time, it would do the United States a historically unparalleled favor by turning it into a land relatively free of liberals.

Professors Sheldon and Drake, interviewed in their office in the New Age wing of the Toronto institute where both are spending a year on leave from Moose Jaw, noted that since their report was issued, events have only confirmed their analysis. When asked how two unknown Canadian academics could have spotted trends that escaped the rest of North America, senior author Sheldon, a tall, bushy-haired, 47-year-old wearing a green and red jogging suit, denied that this was so. "We're no better at foreseeing the future than you are. You shouldn't view our report as a predictive document but as a series of projections based on bedrock trends there for anyone to see."

Arthur Drake, a rotund 40-year-old who spent the interview trimming a button fern, offered a somewhat different perspective. "At the risk of sounding impolite, the distinction here is between what Canadians can see and what you in the states can't see. Remember, we come from a mythical country, one you don't believe to exist—not a bad vantage point for grasping certain continental realities. It's harder for you, and we're sympathetic to that. But all you really had to do was watch the election night maps broadcast by your own networks: that day-glo blue stretching unbroken from sea to sea and the fragile string of red blobs hanging tenuously from the Canadian border. The unconscious sorting out of colors was enough. It told you everything you needed to know, even without our report."

"Just one thing," cut in Sheldon. "When you write this article, make it clear that there's nothing pie-in-the-sky about the report. We've looked the problems square in the eye."

Sheldon and Drake have, in fact, taken special pains to confront the possible criticisms their proposals are likely to raise. In three linked appendixes they deal with the most crucial and difficult of these:

§ What to do with states like Maine. (Suggestions range from ragged or discontinuous borders—the so-called Alaska solution—to massive population exchanges with more conservative areas of Canada.)

§ What to do with West Virginia, the District of Columbia, cities like Pittsburgh, and parts of Northern California and black areas in the South. (Suggestions range from the establishment of a "free city" policy inside the United States, to the setting up of Greater Canadian consulates throughout the country and an offer of asylum to Jesse Jackson and other black leaders.)

§ What to do with the expected flow of refugees in both directions (a subject so complex that it will be the focus of an upcoming *Nation* article).

Nation readers are urged to consider the Sheldon and Drake report themselves ($12.95, I.S.S. Press, Toronto) while time still remains for a reasonable discussion of the

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issues it raises. With this in mind, an ominous signal of which *Nation* readers may already be aware was George Bush's comment to hecklers during his postelection Florida vacation: "Read my lips: You're Canadians." □

Poland

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

ning. The prevailing impression at the end of a recent ten-day journey in Poland with my wife is of the closing of an era, the dwindling of an ideology, the collapse of a system—and perhaps not only in Poland. Things just can't go on as they have, everybody proclaims. The old order is coming to an end; but a new one is not yet ready to take its place.

Pressures for Compromise. What Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski and his men need most is a degree of popular support. Nobody is giving them the slightest benefit of the doubt. Some Poles speak of their masters as fools, others as knaves. But Poland's rulers are unanimously blamed for the mess and judged utterly incapable of extricating the country from it.

One's first, superficial impression of Warsaw is of prosperity, at least for some. The elegant Nowy Swiat ("New World") street had been cleaned and smartened up for the visit of Mikhail Gorbachev. The menus in the growing number of restaurants are no longer "historical documents." Rationing, to some extent, is being applied in Western fashion—by the pocketbook. My friend Krysia was deeply shocked when after an excellent dinner for four I picked up the bill for 15,000 zlotys, half her monthly salary as a hospital psychologist. (The dollar is worth just under 500 zlotys at the official rate and over four times as much on the black market—or I should say gray, since Poles are allowed to have dollar accounts. About $3.4 billion are deposited in Polish banks, and it is estimated that almost as many are to be found in Polish socks. To understand how expensive various goods are for the Poles, consider that the official average monthly salary for the first half of this year amounted to 43,800 zlotys, and that 61 percent of Poles in fact earned less than that.)

As I spoke with people here, I quickly understood that the strikes, although isolated to begin with and carried by the proles alone this time without white-collar support, had transformed the mood of the intelligentsia. At the beginning of this year, many intellectuals were ready to dismiss Solidarity as a saga of the past, a beautiful page of history that it was now time to turn. Today the whole opposition is superficially united around the principle that no deal, no collaboration with the authorities, is possible without the prior recognition of Solidarity as an independent, autonomous union. The Poland of the last twenty years is the best place to study the impact that shifts in the labor movement have had on the mood and influence of the intelligentsia.

I was also given some rapid answers about the prospects for a compromise. Indeed, people supplied so many reasons that the rulers should seek one that I can only summarize them. First the domestic considerations. For any package of economic reforms to stand a chance, the government needs popular support, which an arrangement with the Catholic hierarchy alone cannot provide: A deal with authentic representatives of the labor movement is required. The strikes, though not national in scope, are likely to happen again. Without a pact, they could become a permanent feature of the system. There is also the risk that the next stoppage might lead to a real explosion. "It need not be majestic and orderly like in 1980," said one Solidarity activist. "It might be bloody like in 1970, when strikers tried to storm party headquarters. And a Walesa might prove unable to keep it in check."

International considerations are no less imperative. Poland has a debt of $36.4 billion to Western creditors alone. Rightly or wrongly, it is assumed by the authorities in Warsaw that the spectacular signing of a treaty with the opposition would lead to better terms, bigger credits, higher investments—all measures likely to insure a smoother transition to a different economic model. Finally there is the transmutation of the Russian card in the Polish game. Adam Michnik, whose flat is littered with copies of the Russian journals *Ogonyok* and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, was the first to stick his neck out by proclaiming the importance of Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms. By now Michnik's views are almost commonplace. The facts speak for themselves. A few years ago the risks of an intervention by the Soviet Union was a major concern in Polish calculations. Now it is thought that General Jaruzelski has a fairly free hand, although bloodshed in Poland would not enhance Gorbachev's international prestige.

Most Poles, it must be said, do not yet share Michnik's wise fascination with things Russian. While we were in Poland, Warsaw celebrated "Moscow Week." The hotel was full of Russian actors and athletes; of sophisticated young gymnasts acting like starlets and bemedaled veterans looking like Brezhnev resurrected. Among the shows available we picked an exhibition of political posters. We were able to study the attacks on bureaucracy, pollution and war at our leisure, since we were the only visitors in the hall. It may take some years of Gorbachevism before Poles once again seek light in the East.

Of Frogs and Apparatchiks. If so many reasons prompt the authorities to negotiate, why the prevailing pessimism? The question was first answered with the hackneyed old tale about the frog that is persuaded to carry a scorpion across the river on the ground that, should it sting, they would both drown. It went ahead and stung anyway, for such is the nature of the beast. Nice as a parable, it was rather thin as an explanation.

Bronislaw Geremek, the distinguished medieval historian and perfect linguist who is one of Walesa's chief advisers and the opposition's de facto foreign secretary, quips that the compromise "is badly compromised." Far from denying the pressures on the government to reach an agreement, he told me over dinner that they might bear fruit in the long run, and spoke of "pragmatists" in the leadership who were ap-

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s Europe correspondent. This is the first installment of a two-part article.*

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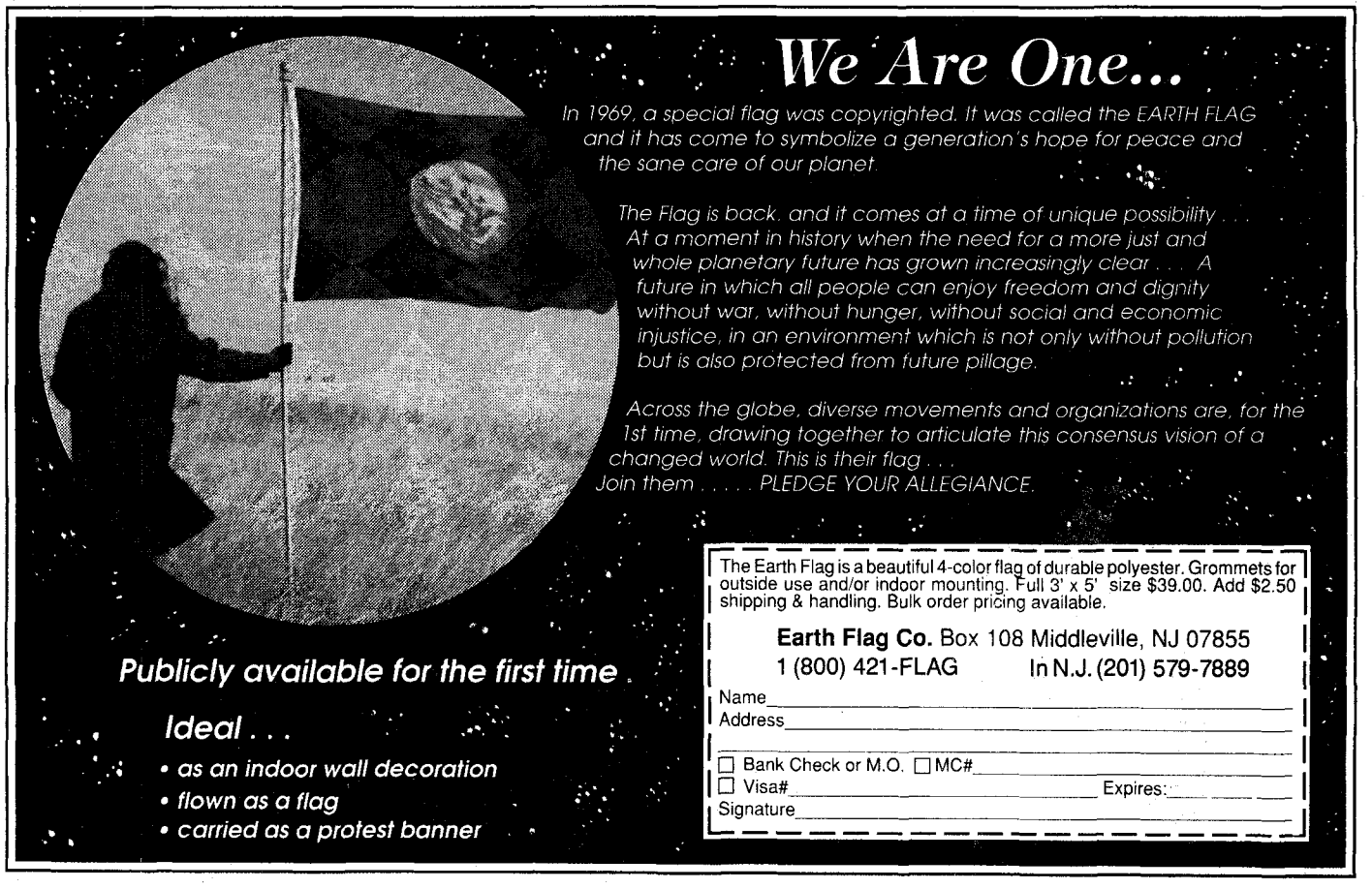
parently ready to take risks for the sake of potential success. Against this, however, he set the fear of the unknown, the power of inertia and the active resistance of large sections of the apparatus. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Walesa's other chief adviser, had drawn my attention to a television news program in which General Jaruzelski, on a visit to Poznan, was berated by a diehard follower: "You had promised never to talk to [Walesa and Co.], and you are letting us down." One participant in preparations for a planned government-opposition roundtable, told me a story in the same vein. A party leader, asked whether the apparatchiks might not be frightened of economic reform, allegedly replied, "They're not, because they don't really know what reform stands for. But they do know what Solidarity stands for."

A party really determined to reach an agreement would have had to educate its followers, prepare them for concessions. But the P.Z.P.R. was doing just the opposite. *Trybuna Ludu*, the party paper, was publishing daily poison-pen portraits of key Solidarity figures and all sorts of statements ruling out union pluralism. Geremek gave these examples to justify his growing pessimism about the possibility for immediate change. The nomination of Mieczyslaw Rakowski as Prime Minister was taken by everyone at Geremek's dinner table as an equally gloomy sign. Rakowski, former editor of *Polityka*, for years the brightest weekly in Eastern Europe, is still viewed in the West as a liberal. But in Poland he is regarded as an enemy of Solidarity. When forming his government, Rakowski offered the job of Deputy Prime Minister to a moderate oppositionist close to the Catholic Church. The man turned it down. In his vanity Rakowski failed to grasp that accepting the job at this stage—before the negotiations—would have been a betrayal of Solidarity that even a moderate could not contemplate.

The meeting between Lech Walesa and Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak, Minister of the Interior, had been a sign, so the argument ran, that the authorities were finally resigned to reach some understanding with the labor movement—the inevitable price of a long-term solution. Rakowski's appointment meant the rejection of this sacrifice and a renewed search for a shortcut. This new postponement might be only a final fling, but nobody can measure its real cost, one close adviser to Walesa told me. There was a wistful note here, reflecting some bitterness. The adviser knew full well what Walesa had to stake in order to bring the August strike to a halt and initiate talks without real guarantees. With the negotiations broken off, would he be able both to remobilize the mass movement and to prevent it from exploding? To find out the mood of the workers who were questioning Walesa's leadership, one had to talk to young protesters on the spot. From dinner at Geremek's, then, we went straight to Warsaw's central station to catch the night train to Gdansk.

Angry Young Proles and "Senators." There used to be a banner next to the Gdansk railway station that proclaimed, with ironic truth: "The working class—the leading force of the nation." It is no longer there. In its place is "There is no freedom without responsibility," which in Polish, both in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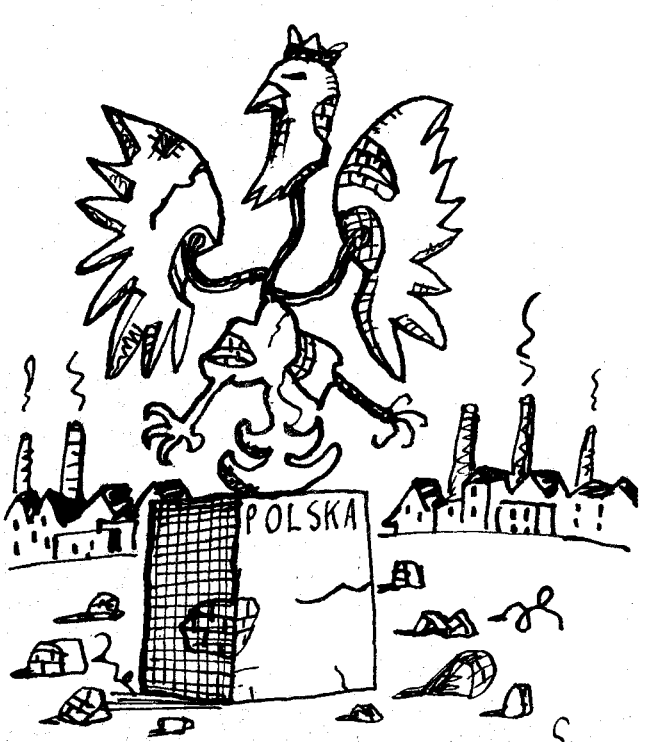
rhythm and rhyme, is the official response to the opposition slogan, "There is no freedom without Solidarity." As we walk toward the sixteenth-century town hall, the beautiful Hanseatic city is barely stirring. We have waited until 6 before waking our hosts, a young couple house-sitting for an absent friend, whose flat serves as an auxiliary information center for the movement. Our tact was a mistake: We gave them a fright because the police now wait until 6 as well.

It's all quickly forgotten over tea. The conversation shortly leads to the complaints of the young generation—the absence of a place of their own. Our friends are both 25, just finishing their studies in Polish literature. They will start teaching soon, each at a salary of about 30,000 zlotys a month. She lives with her in-laws. Fortunately, his parents put him on the waiting list in a housing cooperative and started paying contributions when he was still in his teens. If all goes well, they may have a flat before they are 40. Meanwhile, in their quest for intimacy, they are putting a stove in the shed next to her parents' vegetable plot, a few miles out of town. "And we are lucky," she says. "For our friends, who register now, unless they have an uncle in America with dollars, they will have to wait twenty-five years or more."

First on my schedule in Gdansk is Walesa, because I had seen him on each of my previous visits. I don't expect him, or even wish him, to make any revelations at this stage, before his talks with the government. I meet him in the parish building next to St. Brigid's Church. He arrives, driving his minibus, dressed in blue, in a T-shirt, slightly heavier-set than before. In answer to my broad question about historic compromise, he waffles at first about theory and practice, finds his bearings as he talks, and ends quite effectively on the vital need for greater democracy, including union pluralism. "Society is ready for it. The authorities will have to accept it sooner or later. Whether they are ready now, that is the question."



Walesa reveals his skill when a woman from *Le Figaro*, who has joined us, asks him candidly what his line will be in the talks. "I don't believe in scenarios. My stepfather, before any important meeting, used to mime the whole thing in advance, and I would tease him: What if they bring a cup of coffee at that stage?" The twinkle in his eye has a clear meaning: "You didn't really expect me, my dear lady, to answer your question and walk naked into the negotiation chamber?" The born leader, the instinctive improviser, still has his wits about him. He will need them more than ever now that his leadership is seriously contested. Yet before I see his young critics I must have a word with another old-timer, Bogdan Borusewicz.

Bogdan, a student who became a full-time activist a dozen years ago, was one of the models for Andrzej Wajda's film *Man of Iron*. He now lives in a one-room flat with Alinka Pienkowska, a nurse who was prominent in the 1980 strike. I had not seen Bogdan since 1981. He has spend most of the past seven years underground or in jail. What was the worst thing? I asked him. "The lack of air. They had put a sheet of plexiglass over the window. One evening, when everybody was busy watching the World Cup soccer championship, the quarterfinal between France and Brazil, I smashed it with my stool. Next day the plexiglass was back and my stool was fixed to the floor."

He shrugs. Rather than waste time on personal details, he proceeds with a thoughtful and thorough analysis of this year's strikes in Gdansk. Yes, it was very tough in May and the strikers felt isolated to begin with. Things improved in August. Yes, the young were particularly prominent; they always are when things get tough. Yes, they were driven by their own preoccupations, but the interesting thing is that they could not be bribed by promises of higher wages. Indeed, the only thing they asked for was their own independent union. Solidarity was reaping the reward for its underground activity, for the maintenance of a skeleton structure, and must now take advantage of the situation to strengthen organization in the factories.

I probably gained something in the eyes of the three angry young men I met next by bringing some pictures of demonstrations that Bogdan had given me. Clearly he was one of the few among their elders not to be dismissed contemptuously as a "senator"—that is, a windbag and sellout. Each of these young activists is from the Lenin shipyards. All three were elected delegates of their shops. I have been told that they were particularly active in starting the May strike and then were always present wherever danger threatened. They are in their mid-20s; they look tough and talk mean. "History," said one, "does not happen, it has to be made." They think Walesa was splendid in May and then betrayed them at the end of August. Next time they will have to take things into their own hands, they say. The emphasis is on the rank and file: The proles are the foundation of the movement and leaders are—or rather should be—mere delegates, bound by the wishes of those who elected them. This democratic spirit, however, is coupled with a heavy dose of

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wishful thinking. It seems to them enough to stick together and fight when necessary for the "Reds" to yield and a new era to begin.

The discussion ends in song. Zbyszek is the composer and plays the guitar. He is the tallest of the three, covered with tattoos. One song is a bitter complaint addressed to the *zomos*, the special police squad: "Because a prole dares to fight for something, you have to belabor his kidneys." But you can't frighten those "splendid men," the shipyard workers: "We shall not give in to the cops easily, because our heart is yearning for a fight." It's a rather lively mixture of agitprop and American western.

The radicalism of these activists is not the only mood in Gdansk. The leader of the strike committee at the Gdansk repair yards, who joins us an hour later, is quite different. He meticulously recounts the story of the strike, his efforts to cheer up the workers when they were surrounded by troops. He, too, ended the strike with iron in his soul when Walesa returned empty-handed, but his attitude toward the Solidarity leadership is incomparably more friendly.

Finally, we get a sample of a third component of the young generation. Malgorzata, who still looks like a student, is a representative of WiP, the Polish acronym for Freedom and Peace. This small youth movement has achieved what everyone wagered was impossible. Through hunger strikes, stubbornness and imagination, it forced General Jaruzelski to grant legal status to conscientious objectors. Frail in her black dress, Malgorzata is not carried away: The new law can be invoked only on moral or religious grounds, not political ones, and the commissions that rule on these cases are packed with people close to the regime. The first decisions have been bad, but WiP has lodged appeals. This is just the beginning of the movement.

WiP is a loose association, she explains, whose only binding decisions are those reached democratically by national assembly. Anyone can join, and the temper of the organization varies from region to region, influenced more by ideas of independence in one place, by anarchism in another. She agrees that WiP is the nearest thing in Poland to the Greens and the Western antinuclear movements, with which it has contacts. But its main activity is still assistance to conscientious objectors. Ecology is the next concern. Poland has not yet reached the stage of a critique of productivism (except, say the wits, in practice), and, though women are very active both in the economy and the opposition, feminism still has to make tremendous strides.

How seriously should one take the views of the three young Lenin shipyard rebels? A local lawyer, who knows the group and has no sympathy for its brand of radicalism, says that, while not representative, they are symptomatic. Many young workers at the yards come from outside Gdansk, often from the countryside. They live in hostels, do not have the best jobs and lack the contacts that would allow them to make money on the side. Add to that the frustrations of the young couple whose life together will only begin at 40, and one can understand why the risk of an explosion has to be taken into account in any assessment of Poland's future. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Art and Disaster

DON BOGEN

THE COLLECTED POEMS, 1931–1987. *By Czeslaw Milosz. Ecco Press. 511 pp. $30.*

There is nothing tentative about Polish poetry since World War II. Czeslaw Milosz's poem "Dedication" makes as strong a claim as any for the seriousness of the craft:

> What is poetry which does not save
> Nations or people?
> A connivance with official lies,
> A song of drunkards whose throats
> will be cut in a moment,
> Readings for sophomore girls.

That opening question is easy to pick apart. Did Brecht stop Hitler? Could Neruda prevent the Chilean coup? Perhaps, as Auden wrote in 1940, "Poetry makes nothing happen." Yet verse that ignores the public context does so to its detriment. If poetry is to be more than verbal embroidery, it needs to go beyond romantic yearnings or demonstrations of personal sensitivity. The achievement of Milosz and his fellow postwar Polish poets has been to resist the trivialization of their art.

One simple explanation for the power of this work would be history. Milosz and his younger colleagues Tadeusz Rozewicz, Wieslawa Szymborska and Zbigniew Herbert all lived through the horrors of the war years; poets born in the 1940s, like Stanislaw Baranczak and Adam Zagajewski, came of age in the struggles against Stalinist oppression. But these poets are hardly documentary in their approach. Where we might expect outcries, we get black humor; direct narrative turns into fable, and irony predominates. Here is Milosz, for example, on ways of seeing:

> If I had to tell what the world is for me
> I would take a hamster or a hedgehog
> or a mole
> and place him in a theater seat one
> evening
> and, bringing my ear close to his
> humid snout,
> would listen to what he says about the
> spotlights,
> sounds of the music, and movements
> of the dance.
> ("Throughout Our Lands")

Underlying all this work is a profound skepticism about human achievements, including a distrust of art, language and thought itself reflected in the minimalist vocabulary of Rozewicz, or Herbert's deadpan studies of "Mr. Cogito." The world for these poets is not nearly as stable and sensible as it would appear, and they insist on viewing it with new eyes—a mole's or some other's. Despite their skepticism, however, the work never devolves into mannerist language games or elegant elaborations of boredom. These poets are more aware than most of how easily words can be denatured; they are not about to do it themselves. Their work retains a commitment to basic human values and to poetry's ability to define and defend them.

Born in 1911, a decade before Herbert and Rozewicz, Milosz is somewhat less experimental stylistically than his countrymen, more conventional in punctuation and conversational in tone, and his irony is generally less fierce. But he shares with them the idea that poetry should make sense of the world. Milosz's *Collected Poems* contains some two hundred pieces from a dozen different volumes. It includes all the work from the poet's earlier *Selected Poems* and the three other collections translated into English, as well as poems written since the mid-1980s and new translations of older work. Fluent in English—he has lived in this country for nearly thirty years—and distinguished as a translator in his own right, Milosz has overseen the translation of almost all the work in the collection. The English versions are genuine collaborations between poet and translator, and the result is a smooth, unified volume. Unlike, say, the work of Pablo Neruda, Milosz's poetry does not seem to vary much with various translators. This is a tribute to his own efforts in preparing the collection and to those of his many collaborators, especially Robert Hass, with whom the poet has worked most extensively in recent years. Arranged chronologically, *The Collected Poems* gives readers of English a clear sense of the poet's development for the first time. His immense range stands out immediately. Milosz has never been content to repeat himself. The collection includes epigrams, lyrics, extended monologues and complex sequences, in forms varying from rhymed couplets to Whitmanesque verse paragraphs. Milosz's combination of restless energy and clearly focused concerns comes through well.

The early work, represented in *The Collected Poems* by selections from two books of the 1930s, has the surreal, apocalyptic note of the "catastrophist" group of young poets he helped found. During the war Milosz was active in the Polish Resistance, and in 1945 he published *Rescue*, a volume that established his depth and power. Two complementary sequences anchor this book. "The World," written in the deliberately naïve style of a school primer, depicts a child's environment of apparently stable structures: a room, a house, a family, Europe as "a home for people, dogs, cats, and horses." The more disparate "Voices of Poor People" juxtaposes this ordered vision with the realities of Poland in the war years. "Dedication," quoted above, is from *Rescue*, and its central theme of how art responds to disaster is at the heart of the volume. There is no self-dramatization or shrillness in this book but rather a sense of calm understanding gained through careful craft. In some poems this craft appears as deliberate formal control in the face of chaos. "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto," for instance, uses a darkly lyric refrain—"Bees build around red liver,/Ants build around black bone"—to define the horrors of its subject; and "A Book in the Ruins" captures a scene of devastation in ironic rhymed couplets. Elsewhere the poet develops a more direct voice in which the artistry of the writing is almost transparent. This is the entire poem "Encounter":

> We were riding through frozen fields
> in a wagon at dawn.
> A red wing rose in the darkness.
>
> And suddenly a hare ran across the
> road.
> One of us pointed to it with his hand.
>
> That was long ago. Today neither of
> them is alive,
> Not the hare, nor the man who made
> the gesture.
>
> O my love, where are they, where are
> they going
> The flash of a hand, streak of move-
> ment, rustle of pebbles.

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I ask not out of sorrow, but in
wonder.

The strengths of *Rescue*—its clarity, moral witness and range of approach—continue in Milosz's later work. After serving in the diplomatic corps of the postwar Polish government, Milosz emigrated to the West in 1951, spending ten years as a freelance writer in Paris before becoming a professor of Slavic languages and literature at the University of California, Berkeley. Given this experience it's not surprising that Milosz has public concerns. He maintains a critical distance from that experience, however, rarely placing details from his own life at the center of his poetry. Milosz's approach is not primarily narrative but meditative, his presence in the work not that of a participant in events but that of someone thinking about events. There is an element of balance and deliberation in his thought that gives the poems a quiet authority, as here in "Elegy for N.N.":

We learned so much, this you know
well:
how, gradually, what could not be
taken away
is taken. People, countrysides.
And the heart does not die when one
thinks it should,
we smile, there is tea and bread on the
table.
And only remorse that we did not love
the poor ashes in Sachsenhausen
with absolute love, beyond human
power.

The generality of "People, countrysides" and the simplicity of "tea and bread" make the bare specificity of the ashes all the more startling. Passionate yet not overwhelmed by feeling, the poem draws distinctions that respect both the living and the dead. Milosz's unremitting moral vision gives "Elegy for N.N." a somber wisdom. In this poem, and in "Song on Porcelain," "Voices of Poor People" and others, he is able not only to evoke compassion but to define its limits.

Milosz's engagement with history goes beyond the losses of the immediate past. The notes in the back of *The Collected Poems* show a mind involved with everything from Boleslaw the Brave (967–1025) to early twentieth-century treatments for syphilis. But there is nothing arcane about Milosz's use of historical material. "Greek Portrait," a brief study written during his years as a diplomat in Washington, gives a sense of his basic technique:

My beard is thick, my eyelids half cover
My eyes, as with those who know the
value
Of visible things. I keep quiet as is
proper
For a man who has learned that the
human heart
Holds more than speech does. I have
left behind
My native land, home, and public
office.
Not that I looked for profit or
adventure.
I am no foreigner on board a ship.
My plain face, the face of a tax-
collector,
Merchant, or soldier, makes me one
of the crowd.
Nor do I refuse to pay due homage
To local gods. And I eat what others
eat.
About myself, this much will suffice.

From its subject and quasi-reportorial approach, this portrait of a cautious outsider seems an homage to the work of his great predecessor in the poetry of history, the Greek poet C.P. Cavafy. Like Cavafy, Milosz knows the value of understatement and of a special kind of phrase—"native land," "merchant," "local gods"—that simultaneously sets the scene in the past and leads us toward parallels in our own time. In the same volume (*King Popiel and Other Poems*, 1962), the historical narrative "From the Chronicles of the Town of Pornic" uncovers more complex links between past and present, as power alliances, revolutionary tribunals, financial scams and intricate forms of vengeance wash over a small town, from the Dark Ages to our own era. The ironies here raise basic questions about power, progress and religious faith. In these and other studies of the past Milosz does not so much preserve history as open it for inspection.

As a historical poet, Milosz has a keen eye for the character of cities. Four in particular stand out in his work: Wilno (now Vilnius), Warsaw, San Francisco and Paris. Wilno, the capital of Lithuania, where Milosz spent much of his youth, is part of a lost world. A "City Without a Name," as he describes it in a sequence from the late 1960s, Wilno lives for the poet in a series of luminous moments: a student ball, a street fair with cheap toys and fortune tellers, a shopkeeper instructing her twelve assistants. As a crossroads of Jewish, Slavic and Western European influences, it is simultaneously sophisticated and provincial, skeptical and devout, baroque and *fin de siècle*. If Wilno is nameless now, that condition has less to do with the poet's leaving it as a young man than

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with history: When German troops arrived in World War II, the site of student picnics became a mass grave. Like Wilno, Warsaw reflects the loss of a humane culture, but in the Warsaw poems the devastation is approached directly. The poems of the war years show a city laid waste by human brutality.

The other two urban centers in Milosz's work are more continuing presences for the poet. The San Francisco Bay area feels changeable, open, almost free of history, a "Magic Mountain," as Milosz calls it in one poem, with all the possibilities for pleasure and self-delusion that retreat implies. Milosz's evocative descriptions of the climate of this place—eight months of dry hills, the "grayness and rosiness" of winter, blossoms in February—capture its benign oddity. If California's charms disguise the passage of time, then Paris seems to withstand history by engulfing it:

> Meanwhile the city behaved in
> accordance with its nature,
> Rustling with throaty laughter in the
> dark,
> Baking long breads and pouring wine
> into clay pitchers,
> Buying fish, lemons, and garlic at
> street markets,
> Indifferent as it was to honor and
> shame and greatness and glory,
> Because that had been done already
> and had transformed itself
> Into monuments representing nobody
> knows whom,
> Into arias hardly audible and into
> turns of speech.
> ("Bypassing Rue Descartes")

Milosz catches the essential human energy and the machinelike obliviousness of the metropolis brilliantly here. The City of Light is both a lasting cultural achievement and a relentless mill reducing everything to tiny particles of its own glory. Like all our creations it is as spectacular and mean as those who constructed it.

In his attempts to delineate who we are and what we've done, Milosz has always been an inclusive poet, interested in bringing as much of the world as possible under the scrutiny of his art. The poetic sequence is an important medium for him, and in the past twenty years he has expanded its structure and range.

The two major sequences of the 1960s, "Throughout Our Lands" and "City Without a Name," involve shifts of time and place as the poet juxtaposes Wilno with an ancient Indian village in Arizona, a Lithuanian servant girl with Father Serra. In the longer sequences of the 1970s, "From the Rising of the Sun" and "The Separate Notebooks," Milosz ranges further to include reflections on his own ideas by a Greek-style chorus; quotations from odd works like Professor Erazm Majewski's *Doctor Catchfly: Fantastic Adventures in the World of Insects* ("published for the use of young people in the year 1890") and the nineteenth-century mystical poem "The King Spirit," with commentary; discussion of medieval inventories and registers; etymological speculations; snippets of folk songs; and encounters with intellectual presences from the Apostle Paul to Cézanne. His writing here ranges from formal lyrics to free verse in taut, end-stopped lines; from prose glosses to verse narratives to clumps of one-line stanzas, each a single sentence, arranged like points in a treatise. The energy and abundance are dazzling. There is a new element of self-consciousness in these sequences, as when Milosz announces "A Short Recess" at one point in "From the Rising of the Sun" or lists page numbers from his journals in "The Separate Notebooks." But these two meditations consider much more than their own origins. Central to both are questions of the poet's role in the world: his relation to history and spiritual matters, his powers and responsibilities.

Less dense and energetic than the sequences of the 1970s, Milosz's recent poetry has been largely concerned with looking back. The work since 1980, when he won a Nobel Prize, includes historical poems, like the thoughtful new sequence "*La Belle Époque*," and a number of elegiac pieces in which the personal and cultural merge. Childhood scenes arise fairly frequently, but there is little nostalgia. Neither does Milosz put on the mantle of the wise old man. The late work shows a poet observing his past without exploiting it. Memories are not converted to romantic touchstones of feeling or "from this I learned" fables but rather are considered in their historical context, as when a boyhood ride on the Trans-Siberian Railway expands into a study of the European bourgeoisie, or an adolescent's stroll on the beach becomes a metaphor for the willed ignorance of the 1930s. In "*La Belle Époque*," "Six Lectures in Verse" and other meditations, Milosz develops a vision of human community across the generations, conveying both our compassion for victims and our complicity with oppressors. The work of the 1980s also includes Milosz's most direct en-

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gagement with religious concerns, particularly the question of Christian hope. If Milosz's explorations of the past find little to redeem us, he does not drift into cynicism or an otherworldly retreat from life. His commitment, as he puts it in "Preparation," is to the imperfect and inexact realm of living beings:

> Under not-quite heaven
> on the not-quite earth
> the not-quite guiltless
> and the not-quite degraded.

"Preparation" refers ironically to a "great book" in which the twentieth century "will appear as it really was." That book, of course, is still to be written. But Milosz's work reminds us that poetry can define and address the concerns of an age. With its clarity, historical awareness and moral vision, *The Collected Poems* is among the best guides we have. □

Hip-Hop Fiction

ERIC LOTT

PLATITUDES. *By Trey Ellis. Vintage. 183 pp. $6.95.*

In the annals of the so-called New Black Aesthetic—what one critic has described as a Harlem Renaissance on floppy disk—Trey Ellis's first novel will go down as a young writer's call for a truce in the black literary world. Folding into the novel itself recent disputes between feminists and their detractors over how blacks are to be represented in fiction, *Platitudes* casts a plague on both the Alice Walkers and the Ishmael Reeds. Reed's several attacks on Walker's *The Color Purple* (book and movie), and his polyphonic fictional diatribe *Reckless Eyeballing*, which alleges a widespread conspiracy against black men, have earned him righteous retribution from many quarters. Neither author is named in *Platitudes* but the satirical resemblances are close enough to count. Ellis's strategy unfortunately only partially succeeds; the Reeds come out relatively unscathed. But despite its shortcomings, the book marks the emergence of a talent equal in wit to the best of the "postnationalist" generation Ellis belongs to: filmmakers Warrington and Reggie Hudlin, performance artist Alva Rogers, hip-hop deejays and rappers, novelist Terry McMillan. Most of these artists rely on a recombinant irony no less politically earnest for its ritual dismemberment of the elders.

In an essay forthcoming in the journal *Callaloo*, Ellis playfully describes the impulse behind these new developments as "neobarocco"—an "open-ended, New Black Aesthetic [inherited] from a few Seventies pioneers that shamelessly borrows and reassembles across both race and class lines." This produces, in Ellis's novel, a mutant assemblage of love story, postmodern narrative techniques and postliberation political intentions whose effect is something like crossing Spike Lee with Gilbert Sorrentino. Ellis is a kind of hip-hop novelist, flinging bits of TV, sociobabble, charts and quizzes onto pages already cluttered with a mix of styles and multiple tales. *Platitudes* is staged as competing versions of a story by two black authors who are politically at odds: a celebrated feminist, Isshee Ayam, and a frustrated, aging former nationalist, Dewayne Wellington. Wellington is a bedeviled, sexist cult figure who almost immediately runs out of material and advertises for help with his novel. Ayam, a popular purveyor of rural utopias, takes up the challenge, sending him abusive letters and offering better ideas. Their alternating installments narrate the progress of Earle, a naif, and Dorothy, his elusive object of desire.

Platitudes means to make explicit, through its warring authors, the more or less hidden motives Ellis sees fueling much recent black fiction. Part of the point is that Wellington's novel stalls until Ayam provokes a sense of embattled urgency over the characters of Earle and Dorothy: then it goes, and with a bullet. In Wellington's chapters, Earle is a budding buppie nerd and Dorothy a club-hopping fast-laner, while in Ayam's chapters, Earle and Dorothy are all cornbread innocence awaiting their first kiss. The more misogynist the Wellington chapters become, often out of jealousy of Ayam and other successful writers, the more the Ayam chapters conjure changes of heart out of benighted males. The installments tussle until Wellington and Ayam somehow realize a sense of solidarity and consummate their stories, and then their relationship. The present impasse between black men and women has deformed the writing that might take them beyond it, goes the conceit; now they must write themselves into some kind of harmony.

But a real sense of resolution eludes this allegory of black literary politics. For one thing, Ellis is clearly more invested in Wellington's Earle, saving his most savage attacks for Ayam's sentimental prose and politics. Though *Platitudes* means to distance the stories of both authors by its main device, Wellington's tale is the one finally endorsed; the various jokes on Ayam go unanswered. The problem is authors on both sides of the gender divide are guilty of Ayam's *Green Pastures* excesses. She is the author of the best-selling books *Chillun o' de Lawd, Hog Jowl Junction* and *My Big Ol' Feets Gon' Stomp Dat Evil Down*; her prose recalls the more tiresome writing of racial uplift:

> The next morning's sun woke the heavens with a friendly warmth and glow that told all the earth's creatures that Sunday had finally and so gloriously arrived. Mama leaned over the makeshift stove, frying a spoonful of cornmeal mush and reboiling last week's coffee for her and her grown daughters. But for Earle, their seed carrier, their hope, Mama squeezed the last drops of milk from the shriveled and near-spent teats of their wizened goat, Sojourner.

Those rightly suspicious of the impulse to lampoon black women's writing in this age of backlash will find ample cause for alarm in *Platitudes*. To be sure, Wellington is nailed for the way his envy of successful male and female writers infects his novel in progress, but it is finally only Wellington's personal progress, his involvement with Ayam, that is resolved, and not the political mess he has instigated.

This flawed satire is overshadowed in any case by Ellis's preoccupation with the inner drives and desires of a historically new (and underrepresented) character, the black M.I.T.-bound adolescent. Ellis has a fine ear for adolescent inner monologue. Near the beginning, Earle, the buppie boy brought up between the white and black worlds, goes uptown:

> Where's my food? I don't want to be killed up here. . . . Stop fooling around and just look mean so they won't know you're not from uptown. Yeah, iss cool whussup yeah. Shit Earle they spotted you a half hour ago. Yeah there he is the black Howdy Doody face, I bet he's got lots of bread on hisself—bread? Do they still say that?

There is a welcome absence of socio-

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logical talk about being in a difficult racial and class position, and much good writing about how it feels to be there. Ellis also coaxes a bemused interiority out of Dorothy's Valley-girl jargon, the kind of feat most young novelists are still reaching for. Even the seemingly obligatory brief descent into socialite realism transcends the genre:

> Sheena asks [her pickup] where he goes and he says Columbia Med, but it's just his first year. He just escaped from Yale (laughs). Yale? says Julie, leaning over her guy and Sheena. Did he know Winslow Pepper? and of course the guy says back, Winnie? They did Saybrook together. He's good people.

Ellis hedges his bet by having Ayam speak overpreciously about this story's "dialectic between class struggle and cultural assimilation," but that's pretty much the tale he has to tell. "Yeah, this class shit is crazy," says Dorothy; and while consoling herself that after business school it's Morgan Stanley and five figures, she reflects that it's cool to have an absent father and a mother who runs a Harlem diner: "And just once I want some Graham or Brett or Ethan to say, You're joking, but they never do 'cause they think I'll rip their dick out." As with this highly conflicted bit of self-consciousness, Ellis lets his characters' contradictions stand, and by doing so engages the politics of representation much more daringly than he can in the allegorical frame. If literary conventions like Ayam's don't do justice to the people they hope to represent—as Ralph Ellison put it, "Watch out there, Jack, there's people living under here"—the point would seem less to punish the presumed offenders than to invent some characters that break the molds. Ellis has gone some way toward doing that.

This itself is no mean political act, as I have hinted. And it doesn't by any means preclude technical self-consciousness; the New Black Aesthetic is full of self-reflexive moves. But there do seem to be stories at loggerheads in *Platitudes*. Not those of Ayam and Wellington, but Ellis's amusingly ironic one of buppie adolescents in Harlem set against his earnest tale of disaffected authors in a paradise regained—the "new" aesthetic, strangely, versus an old story of insurmountable differences overcome by love. In a way the literary-political allegory could deepen the rift it would heal. As moving as the reunion of Ayam and Wellington is, sexual consummation is not the richest image of resolution for a political situation of longstanding inequity. Heterosexual romance too often reiterates precisely this inequity. And it is the work that Ellis parodies, that of Walker and others, that has done something to clarify this matter. The emergent aesthetic Ellis and his cohort are producing should avoid such ties to the politics of the past. □

Recent Orthodoxies

MAUREEN MULLARKEY

WOMEN, ART, AND POWER AND OTHER ESSAYS. *By Linda Nochlin. Harper & Row. 176 pp. $22.50.*

The fragile art of writing history, in the words of Fernand Braudel, lies in working against the grain of the profession and studying not only the prevailing moment but also its opposite, "that harvest of contrary experiences which fought hard before they went down." This is the necessary task of feminist art historians. Linda Nochlin, however, uses the discipline as a flight from history that ignores the complexity of contradictory possibilities. *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*, a collection of previously published articles and lectures, disdains art and snubs history where they cannot be made to serve a fixed agenda.

Nochlin earned her reputation as an art historian with the 1971 publication of *Realism*, an eminent study of mid-nineteenth century social and intellectual life. In the years since, she has embraced the romance of cultural propaganda with a fundamentalist's distaste for the variousness and intricacy of the social predicament. Art's reflection of women's participation in "the gendered society" is significantly more nuanced than Nochlin's enthusiasm admits. Despite its intellectualized format, the title essay of the new book is squarely in the American evangelical tradition. Animated by a subjective, quasi-ethnic antagonism, it points toward cultural vigilantism and censorship in art. Not only the nude but any representation of women at all and High Art itself join mixed dancing and godless Communism as historical obstacles to the New Pentecost. Those women who take issue with the methods of this Awakening are dismissed as living proof of "the patriarchal discourse of power over women."

Nochlin serves herself best with straight scholarship. The lively essay on the Pre-Raphaelite obsession with fallen women is undogmatic and useful. Here Nochlin stays close to her sources and within the domain of her expertise. Her intelligence is sharply focused and the commentary is lucid and authoritative. This is the Nochlin of *Realism*, using art to reconstruct the history of past assumptions which linger as our own. Examining Dante Gabriel Rossetti as an artist typical of his time, she traces the prevalence of the belief that the only honorable role for women is within the family. Pre-Raphaelite interiors, sodden with sexual gloom, were cluttered with details of the fall and subsequent expulsion from the "parlor/paradise." Nochlin exerts a historian's prerogative, viewing the paintings as social realities that imply the preoccupations and conditions of their age. The method is reliable here because the works of Rossetti and his circle were a thicket of references to Victorian society.

A similar approach subordinated to ideological prescriptions is strenuously unimpressive. The difference is one of empathy. And, as the book indicates, of ambition. In *Realism*, Nochlin's engagement with her sources was paramount. Since then, her attention has shifted to a facile orthodoxy that decrees its own conclusions with scant help from her material. The dislocation yields a safe, middlebrow imitation of radicalism that comes close to what Milan Kundera termed "kitsch of the Grand March." Her brass wind piece on Florine Stettheimer is a case in point.

Stettheimer's paintings—tongue-in-cheek insider entertainments and whimsical flower arrangements—are frothy and fun. But Nochlin unfurls them as evidence of the radical "social idealism" of a "determined feminist." Eyewash. Stettheimer's life was an exaggerated cakewalk to the influence and attentions of men. Dedicated to the immaculate calling of Art Hostess, the three Stettheimer sisters ("Virgins by desire," crooned Carl Van Vechten) were all sublimated sexuality decked in the trappings of rococo femininity ("Ultra-feminine," said Marsden Hartley). From one world war to the next, they ran a high bohemian

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salon for a homeric catalogue of male notables. Dinners were legendary: feather soup, oyster salad and squab served on Old Roman damask and antique Italian lace altar cloths amid grandiose floral schemes. Even Florine's biographer Parker Tyler chirped, "A little removed from rough reality but so what?" Nochlin rationalizes the flamboyant artifice of wealth by interpreting Stettheimer's cupcakes as "social investigations" and hers a voice for social equality:

> Her sympathy for black causes can in addition be inferred not merely from her work but from her close friendship with one of the staunchest supporters of black culture, the music critic, belle lettrist, and bon vivant, Carl Van Vechten.

Any such inference is irresponsible and suspect. Van Vechten, white midwife and tour guide to the Harlem Renaissance, promoted the patronizing idea that there is something innately different in the way blacks respond to stimuli. He encouraged blacks, true primitives, to express the eternal Negro soul in an appropriately primitive art style. Black historian Nathan Irvin Huggins remarked that Van Vechten would never have adopted Harlem the way he did if he had believed blacks were like white people. Condescension is the keynote of Stettheimer's poem to Van Vechten honoring his novel *Nigger Heaven*: Nochlin quotes it without turning a hair. "Darling Moses//Your Black Chillun/Are floundering/In the sea// . . . Holy Moses// Lead us on/to Happyland."

Black figures were nothing new in the work of white painters. To earlier images of bucolic slavery and the dignified humility of former slaves, Stettheimer added jazzy caricatures of the night life that brought dear ole massa closer to Natural Rhythm. Blacks appear in her work because they were sensational and in vogue. In the twenties, white bohemia shuffled along to the Savoy to be *intime* with the underside, and coon songs were the rage. The popularity of Tin Pan Alley's "All Coons Look Alike to Me" was a clue to the nature of white infatuation. There is nothing insurgent about voyeurism and noblesse oblige, but Nochlin has a syllabus to follow. She touts Stettheimer as a visionary who "stresses racial uniqueness and self-identification rather than brotherhood at the expense of authentic ethnicity." Despite its high social cost, the glib romanticization of difference suits Nochlin's separatist mood—a mood that presents itself in opposition to "the white male Western viewpoint" even at those junctures where it surrenders to or apes it.

The real significance of Stettheimer, a trained painter and faux naïf, is that her life and work were a thorough capitulation to camp, the predominantly gay male phenomenon dictating the larger shift of sensibilities occurring in our time. Nochlin's claim that women and gays are allies in the "subversive" aspect of camp robs feminism of content and insight. The distribution of Stettheimer's work and its visibility in three major New York museums (compare the invisibility of Gwen John, Paula Modersohn-Becker, the magnificent Käthe Kollwitz) is a testament to the concentration of wealth and power and a male-dominated spoils system that are very much intact. The only thing Stettheimer's work proves is that it pays to have friends. She had Marcel Duchamp, founding father of camp, who arranged a posthumous exhibition of her paintings at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1946. Thus is art history created *ex nihilo*.

Nochlin's exercise on Berthe Morisot should send readers to the library for Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt's *Art Under a Dictatorship*. Particularly relevant is its chapter on art education in the Third Reich and the special mission of the art historian: to popularize art history and exploit art appreciation in the service of

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the people. In 1971, Nochlin cautioned against rehabilitating minor careers such as Morisot's. Here she does just that, this time from a debased Marxist angle. Morisot's slight, unresolved *Wet Nurse and Julie* triggers a labored tour de force on "the thematics of work" and women workers in the nineteenth century. A brief history of wet nursing clobbers the bourgeoisie while the historical Morisot, the nonpareil of bourgeois advantage, evaporates into the thin air of Nochlin's mythomania.

The essay is a parasite upon the painting's title. The work itself is indistinguishable from any other image of a mother and child. By sleight-of-mind, this gentle, superficial oil sketch is metamorphosed into a daring, innovative "work scene" of an importance "unparalleled in the annals of paintings." Its insubstantiality was an accommodation to the taste of the time for unfinished work and an extension of Impressionist interest in the dissolution of form. Nochlin exults as if it were a specimen of the Piltdown Woman. She galumphs down the polemical path into a fractured sociology and rhetorical moral order, trying to contemporize Morisot with a trendy reference to surrogate mothers. An analogy between wet nursing and surrogate mothering abdicates historical sense to a partisan stance. Worse, it corrupts those distinctions on which moral choices are made.

It is a disquieting performance that acquiesces in the judgment that the only work worthy of the name is salaried. Much inferior to Morisot's outstanding nursery scene *The Cradle*, *Wet Nurse and Julie* is waved like a class action suit because its title refers to wage-earning activity. This is the prejudice that dogs the reputation of Mary Cassatt. The splendor of Cassatt's command of form, her genius for summoning a human presence and graphic mastery cannot quite be called great because they were expended on women and children. At home. (Cassatt, passionately outspoken on behalf of Dreyfus, broke with the anti-Dreyfus Degas, a close friend, over the case. But she did not make a point of painting Jews so she earns no credit as a Political Thinker from Nochlin. Art, especially the discussion of politics in art, gives scholars and critics a means to defend values which need never be practiced.)

Grandniece of Fragonard, pupil of Corot, friend and sister-in-law of Manet, affluent salon-goer and hostess to the culturati of her time, Morisot was exquisitely placed for achievement and recognition. Yet she did not produce a body of work the equal of Cassatt's. Cassatt, acknowledged in her lifetime as Morisot's superior, was largely self-supporting. Through her initiative with Louisine Havemeyer, she aided the livelihood of other Impressionists as well. Nochlin might have explored the meaning of this contrast. But chivalry lives on in guerrilla scholarship and so Morisot cannot be held accountable for her own secondary status. And the powerful Cassett has to be ignored because she challenges the "lack of self determining power" and "the implicit context of passivity, sexual availability, and helplessness" that Nochlin insists has been the condition of women artists.

Reprinted here is the 1971 essay that spurred the feminist art movement: "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" The answer, it seems, is that the movement did not really want any. It preferred jeering at "the myth of the Great Artist" and pointing a finger at the nature of art. Nochlin follows her fine dis-

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cussion of the fallacy of so-called masculine or feminine styles with the contradictory suggestion that no appropriate "language of form" exists for women. Traditional definitions of art are "intellectual distortions" reflecting the "unstated domination of white male subjectivity." In other words, women should not be judged by "male" standards of quality. By insinuating a false opposition between women's abilities and concepts of quality, the argument is protectionist and retrograde. Its implications recall Van Vechten and the glamour of Negroness.

A rationale that absolved women from the history of human excellence was a brilliant expediency for a movement seeking the strength of numbers. What Nochlin once derided as "the Lady's Accomplishment" ("a modest, proficient, self-demeaning level of amateurism") was transformed by scholarly fiat into womanart and the Feminist's Accomplishment: an immodest, not necessarily proficient, self-assertive level of amateurism that coincided nicely with camp's assault on taste. Less a revolution than a promotional tactic, the feminist art movement was one more trick of the bazaar characteristic of the culture it presumed to subvert. A candid appraisal of that movement and of Nochlin's role in it would be valuable. But Nochlin has ascended into certitude leaving criticism behind under interdict. She pumps the same dismal list of names, including the adolescent Sylvia Sleigh (wife of influential critic Lawrence Alloway), that signals a discernment quarantined by clubhouse politics. She barely nods to gifted women—Nancy Grossman, Sandra MacKintosh, Nell Blaine, Lenore Tawney, scores of others—who do not have the required ideology or the party circuit to run interference for their work. Certainly Barbara Hepworth, too long in the shadow of Henry Moore, deserves more than passing reference.

The historical spirit is critical but the burden of these essays is catechetical. In the cope and chasuble of a doubly ordained Art Feminist, Nochlin is as revolutionary as a 1950s Catholic. Back then, ardent nuns devised apologetics classes to prove Darwin wrong. High-school students were exempt from the biology Regents, taking the diocesan substitute instead. The Catholic intellect did not measure itself by secular standards and the Legion of Decency went to the movies with the same barren disapproval Nochlin brings to unsanctioned art. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Waiting for Godot
Coriolanus
The Devil's Disciple
Ghosts
She Stoops to Conquer
Berenice

The existing stock of dramatic literature is such that, were all living playwrights to succumb en masse to writer's block, theaters and audiences could be kept supplied for an indefinite period from the wealth already available. And repertory companies do keep that wealth in circulation. At the beginning of the current season there were no fewer than twenty revivals running or about to open in New York City. More than half of these were for runs limited to a month or less. Many, admittedly, of the more ephemeral productions have an audience in mind only secondarily, their chief purpose being to provide on-the-job training for aspiring actors and directors. But often as not the dramatic fare that's served up is palatable if not gourmet, and so nonfinicky playgoers who are attentive to the listings in *The Village Voice* or the Sunday edition of *The New York Times* should be able to attend revivals three or four times a week all year round. Such a playgoer in the week of November 6 would have been able to select from a menu including Shakespeare, Shaw, Ibsen, Gogol, Chekhov, Otway, O'Neill, Beckett, Claudel and others of less than canonical stature.

The hot ticket among these was *Waiting for Godot*. Its all-star cast had committed themselves to so short a run that a goodly number of the Lincoln Center subscribers were unable to get seats. *The Times*'s Frank Rich did what he could to mollify their sense of miff by pronouncing the production unworthy of Beckett's genius, while in *The New Yorker* Mimi Kramer gave so circumstantial an account of the staging that no one who read it need admit to the shame of not having been there. In conclusion she wondered whether we lucky few who saw this *Godot* will look back in years to come and say we were there when. Will we mythologize Robin Williams's Estragon as "those who saw the original production—even those who admit there was nothing special about it—reminisce about seeing Bert Lahr?" "Probably," she answers herself, but only from a need to "come away with *something* after so much fuss."

Without going into raptures, I must say I thought it merrier than that. If Mike Nichols has exerted himself to inject more laughter into the play than the text might suggest to a close (i.e., academic) reader, that is what directors are paid to do: invent, enrich, extrapolate, intensify and, most of all, entertain. They are also arbitrators of the conflicting interests of author and actors, a conflict likely to be resolved in the actors' favor, especially when the author has absconded, like a god, from the scene of his creation. Nichols undoubtedly allows Steve Martin and Robin Williams to put their own Martin and Williams trademark stamps on their roles, but surely that is what they were hired to do. It is Beckett's play that must prove adaptable to their requirements, not the other way round, for it is part of what makes a play great (i.e., universal) that it can accommodate the local accidents of casting. If *Waiting for Godot* is the masterpiece it's cracked up to be, then it should work as a vehicle for the talents of two such accomplished and intelligent clowns. And so, by and large, it does. The audience has a lot to laugh at, and one scene of sustained comic splendor, with Bill Irwin as the malfunctioning sherpa Lucky, careens out of control—a scene that for all its textual density may most aptly be likened to the inspired comic choreography of the star clown of the Cirque du Soleil, Denis Lacombe. Indeed, it will almost certainly be Irwin, not Williams, who'll be accounted legendary for this *Godot*.

The problem that Martin and Williams face is that so much of their material is portentous or dull. Beckett had not yet pared his art down to an exiguous minimum, nor was he sure that people would understand that he was a Serious Dramatist if he did not strike a few classic poses. Vladimir and Estragon's theological discourse on the fate of the thieves hung with Christ is a vermiform appendix of Beckett's Catholic upbringing; it is an alien presence in the Godot world, otherwise so carefully flensed of historic particularities. Similarly, Vladimir's Act II speculations on where they are and what they've done are a mistake: It's like a flashing sign above the stage saying: YOU ARE ENTERING A DREAMWORLD. WATCH OUT FOR SYMBOLS! These are small imperfec-

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tions in a good play, but the actors must deal with them as best they can; and as they do, the audience can't help shifting in its seats and wondering if there is not another way to do the play so that what seems portentous might not be its very essence. Beckett does, after all, subtitle this "a tragicomedy," and the tragic element surely is de-emphasized in this production, whether by Nichols's conscious strategy or by the sheer force of redeeming friendliness that Martin and Williams generate between them. I'd prefer to think that they have simply allowed Beckett's meaning to shine out from behind his text; to wit, that the best cure for existential despair is banter with a loved friend.

Coriolanus is the sixth production of the Shakespeare canon to be presented by Joseph Papp at the Public Theater, and I liked it as little as last season's *Julius Caesar*, though I must credit the director, Steven Berkoff, with erring for the sake of an idea, or at least of a style. He choreographs as much as directs, having the mob move and speak in choral unison and requiring stylized movements of the stars even in their big scenes. Irene Worth as Volumnia must pantomime picking the roses from an entire hedge during her first big scene, while Ashley Crow as Virgilia contends with a compulsion mechanism that appears to derive from the art of weaving, a traditional activity of classical wives. The battle scenes, which can be the glory, even the raison d'être, of a proper *Coriolanus*, were the pits. In the first, the ensemble members fight invisible foes—and look like a bunch of kids playing cowboys and Indians. Then they kill each other serially and seemingly at random—in slow motion. Then Christopher Walken in the title role deals with the lot of them with a few effortless uppercuts to the empty air as the actors obligingly take a fall. Walken acts as though he were, indeed, Coriolanus, and not yet persuaded to accommodate, by acting, the base requirements of the stinking mob. Not that he was regal; only disdainful.

The set design by Loren Sherman and the costumes by Martin Pakledinaz were in keeping with the star's approach—to call it muted would be to overstate the matter. Some light shone from the darkness. Paul Hecht delivered his lines as Menenius Agrippa so well that one regretted that Walken could not more often have been onstage to hear them: He needs lessons in delivering Shakespearean diction. Also, the two tribunes, played by Larry Bryggman and Andre Braugher, acted with some vigor. I confess I didn't stay for the end. That's one of the nice things about Shakespeare: There'll usually be another chance.

The Devil's Disciple at the Circle in the Square Theatre and *Ghosts* at the Roundabout on Union Square represent the mezzo-mezzo range of classic repertory in New York at the upper-professional end of the scale. Without realizing either play's full emotional potential, they offered moments and single performances that commanded respect, and both were undone by one crucial mistake in casting. (Or was it direction? These are questions of the might-have-been.)

In the Shaw play it was Victor Garber in the title role who bollixed things. Garber's sense of timing is as faulty as the Rolex you might buy for $15 after the show from one of the many vendors on Broadway at that hour. He pauses respectfully before he responds to anyone, and if he has delivered anything like an epigram, he comes to a full stop before proceeding to the text's next red light. None of the other actors on the stage hobbled along in this way, so it can't be that Garber was under orders from director Stephen Porter to retard his delivery for the sake of an audience thought to be slow on the uptake.

Philip Bosco, who is accounted a Shavian's Shavian, handled the role of General Burgoyne with a Falstaffian gusto I can't imagine the part ordinarily receives, and Remak Ramsay acquitted himself of the part of Anthony Anderson, the minister turned revolutionary firebrand, with such energy and charm that one could not help but wish he'd had a shot at playing Dick Dudgeon. Garber, aside from his speech problems, added none of the flamboyance and body English needed to make Dudgeon's loose talk about being of the devil's party anything but the emptiest twaddle.

In *Ghosts* the central absence was also the putative hero, Oswald Alving, played by Raphael Sbarge, and once again it was a man of the cloth, Pastor Manders, played by David McCallum, who redeemed the show. There is a dance exercise that requires being spun about blindfolded until disoriented and then walking slowly and steadily until one has walked into a (preferably brick) wall. McCallum performs each of Manders's successive moral pratfalls with the perfect unwittingness this exercise is meant

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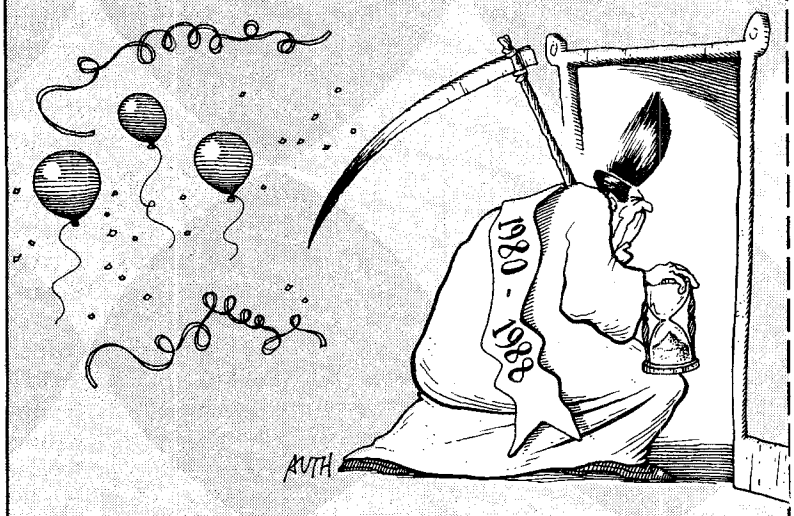

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to teach. It was his perpetual discomfiture rather than Oswald's simmering anguish that came to be the focus of the evening, and this gave the play a flavor more of Shaw than of Ibsen, but it was engrossing for all that.

Fionnula Flanagan, a Los Angeles–based actress who has specialized in bringing Joyce to the stage, was Mrs. Alving, on whose shoulders falls the task of delivering Ibsen's most potentially portentous lines, including, several times, the title, delivered *sotto voce* to underline significant moments of action. She did it as naturally as saying hello. The one thing she couldn't do was to get Raphael Sbarge to emote, and so her scenes with her son were like watching a tennis pro play against a concrete wall. The play is worth seeing, even so, for the sheer mechanical perfection of Ibsen's script, in which there is not one word that does not advance the plot, nor any stretch of exposition that is not, also, tingling with emotional energy. If you have had the good luck to have remained innocent of what the story is about, I urge you to see the play with a maiden imagination.

Finally, two offerings by the Pearl Theatre, on West Twenty-Second Street. After seeing the first of them, a zestful rendering of *She Stoops to Conquer*, and perusing its list of past and future productions, I thought that I had come upon the beau ideal of Off-Off-Broadway repertory companies. In a long, narrow shopfront space, with only some seventy-two seats, the Pearl staged Goldsmith's amiable comedy (perhaps the least offensive masterpiece in all world drama) with more finesse and theatrical intelligence than is to be found in all three concurrent productions at the Public Theatre. (Which, besides *Coriolanus*, is home to Richard Foreman's *What Did He See?* and an innocuous waxwork of a comedy from 1942, *Cafe Crown*, concerning either of which the less said the better.) The entire, largish cast entered into the festive spirit of Goldsmith's play as though they'd been enchanted into English gentry, and the effect was not unlike the performance of Farquhar that is the focus of Thomas Kenneally's recent novel *The Playmaker*. In describing how the first group of convicts transported to Australia stage *The Recruiting Officer*, Kenneally has shown what is timeless and most to be treasured in the ephemeral counterworlds of the stage. One lesson easily drawn from his pages, or from such a production as the Pearl's *She Stoops to Conquer*, is that good theater is a function not of stars or budgets but of good writing, high spirits and capable acting. Joanne Camp and James Nugent in the leading roles were more than capable, but they must share applause with Bonnie Horan, Patrick Tull, Robin Leslie Brown and Tim O'Hare. When so many actors need be praised, necessarily the director, Bob Verini, must be honored, particularly as this production appears to have been his first undertaking on such a scale. (Watchers of the TV program *Jeopardy* may already be acquainted with Verini: He was last year's grand prize winner.)

Alas, glory is a transitory thing, and the Pearl's next production, Racine's *Berenice*, did not at all measure up to its Goldsmith. In extenuation of the failure it must be said that almost any English-language production of Racine is liable to come a cropper for lack of actable translations. But even allowing for the sea change between languages, French classicism requires an acting style within the range of few English-speaking actors. The trick is to embody (and give voice to) a kind of animated Platonic figure, to become the embodiment of a Raphael painting, with extravagant gestures but noble withal. If the principals entrusted with the roles (including Joanne Camp, who handled Goldsmith's demands effortlessly) were not equal to such, they can be blamed only for reaching beyond everyone's grasp. Almost no one—including Glenda Jackson—brings off Racine in English. Surely the Pearl will have more success with the final three plays of its ambitious season: *The Philanderer* by Shaw, Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and (let it be so) *All's Well That Ends Well.* □

CATWALK

To fall from the bow catwalk
was certain death, and so nights
it was off limits,
and so nights we'd go there
between launch and recovery
and lie on the wire mesh,
pass a joint, watch the stars,
the white bone of the bow-wave
stories beneath us.

The shore bristled
with our gifts of light,
and there was white bone
in the sky, too, splitting
it down the middle.

Then we heard the story of the sailor
on another carrier
who rolled from a gun-tub
and swam all the black night
until a tin can found him
in the impossible dawn.

Sometimes a terror came over you.
Something you couldn't name—worse
than the idea of falling
into night, forever, something
to hold you, knuckles cramped
on the steel net, seeing
the beast you rode for what it was,

knowing that the thrumming you heard
in the dark chambers below decks
was a heart beating like your own,
and then the dreams
that you'd somehow already fallen.

Frank X. Gaspar

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EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 675*)

new Soviet world was not reborn *ab ovo* the day Gorbachev became General Secretary, and sneers at my remark about Brezhnev's "golden age" for the Soviet working class are silly, as I'm sure many of the promoters of *perestroika* in the Soviet Union would readily acknowledge. An egalitarian wage structure, guaranteed employment and basic food prices steady at 1962 levels tend to be appreciated by workers and regarded by them as not at all incompatible with economic reform.

I'm all for *glasnost*, obviously, but that does not mean abdication of political perspectives or of criticism; nor should such criticism be construed, as Fast with considered cheapness does, as a yearning for gulag and firing squad. Many supporters here of *glasnost* and *perestroika* are either woolly-minded or chillingly clear about what they want: the discipline of the market, the therapeutic powers of unemployment, wage differentials and, ultimately, the political economy of the BMW.

What bothers me about the average discussion of *perestroika* is the predictable narrowness and conservatism of focus: invocation of the Hungarian and Yugoslav models (both in terrible shape) or of the significance of the Polish situation. Why not look at some economic success stories, like the G.D.R. (which has had a private sector since the war and *perestroika* for fifteen years), or Bulgaria or Cuba? Normally it's *verboten* to be critical about the limitations of the Polish labor insurgency, for example Solidarity's disgusting deference to Margaret Thatcher. Meanwhile, *The Nation*'s very disappointing special issue on Cuba treated what has been in the main a heroic socialist triumph, achieved under siege conditions just ninety miles from Market Central, from the ideological standpoint of an establishment liberal in the State Department. This is also the perspective of *The Nation*'s "defense" correspondent, Michael Klare.

But whatever the reaction here, I like to think that my *Nation* columns were read with unwavering attention in the Politburo, since Soviet foreign policy has markedly altered from the servile posture that I was complaining about. The clearest example is the tougher Soviet attitude toward U.S.-Pakistani flouting of the accords on Afghanistan. The Russians seem to have realized that when all the fine talk about mutual understanding was done, the United States was trying to consolidate a position inside Afghanistan, the better to foment ethnic-religious schism inside the Soviet Union and to establish a base for possible intervention in Iran, in the event of untoward developments following Khomeini's departure, presumably not to be delayed indefinitely, from terra firma.

Tariq Ali's letter is mostly about events in Afghanistan that I did not discuss, but the wine he now consumes as part of his revolutionary duties reviewing restaurants for *The Spectator* ("After a great deal of discussion we decided on Château Latour 1970") seems to have clouded his memory and judgment.

He may now amputate a Bonapartist Taraki from any notion of revolution, but in 1978 he wrote in *Socialist Challenge* that the program of Taraki and the P.D.P.A. "reflects real revolutionary democratic positions." I don't see what Kim Il Sung has got to do with the story. Taraki was infinitely preferable to Amin, but both were authentically Afghan in their follies, and the fundamentalist opposition was ignited not by terror but by the very reformist projects (women's rights, etc.) endorsed by Tariq in 1978. Raja Anwar's book makes this pretty clear.

Tariq's account of Soviet motives seems mad to me. The intervention had less to do with missile deals than with the deteriorating situation under Amin and with the intent of the Shah, Zia and sponsors in Washington, such as Brzezinski and correlates in the C.I.A., to violate Afghanistan's nonaligned status. Carter's defeat by the U.S. hawks on SALT II may have fueled the Russians' feeling of "what have we got to lose" but was scarcely decisive. Whatever they may have told Tariq on his last state visit to Moscow, I doubt he had access to records of Politburo discussion and votes, unless Yakovlev has been thoughtfully forwarding them to *New Left Review* for scrutiny. I'm not opposed to Soviet withdrawal but was critical of the manner in which it was being done. As for proletarian internationalism, if I find a Czechoslovak socialist I'll ask him why almost the first act of the Dubcek crowd was to end assistance to the Vietnamese.

Klare's snooty letter is a marvelous example of the syndrome I was attacking: that of academics and foundation types shuttling from one comfortable conference to the next, drawing up ten-point programs to end the cold war.

Of course the Soviet Union has been more concerned with national interest than proletarian internationalism and of course it has supported regimes such as Iraq, Sudan and Nasserist Egypt (not to mention Argentina), which have jailed, tortured and butchered their internal Communist opposition. There are general tendencies to be considered. Where the Russians have been dealing with regimes under pressure or attack from the United States they have tended to look the other way if any indigenous opposition movement is being suppressed. As noted above they have pursued their own interests over international solidarity but have tended to support anti-imperialist national liberation movements, as in Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, Angola and Nicaragua. In those cases where a Third World movement has been seeking to alter national boundaries (Biafra/Nigeria, Eritrea/Ethiopia, even

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Pakistani dissidents in Afghanistan/Pakistan) the Russians have not been supportive.

That said, I think Klare is softheaded. The wars in Korea and Vietnam were not byproducts of superpower rivalry. In both instances the United States wanted to crush indigenous revolution. What does Klare think "conflict" (even the "final" one) is all about? The United States seeks to establish hegemony in the Third World and has used anticommunism and anti-Sovietism as the propaganda equivalents of the older "white man's burden." If Klare thinks some decorous conference of twin souls in the Committee on U.S.-Soviet Relations can terminate the fundamental, inevitable antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union and prompt, in some spirit of bipartisan tolerance for Third World self-determination, the withdrawal of the United States from, let us say, its bases in the Philippines, he's nuts and should be stayed from contact with impressionable youth in the area of the Five Colleges. He should also know that if it were not for the Soviet Union the revolutions in Cuba, Vietnam, Nicaragua and Angola would not have survived. If he thinks authentic indigenous revolution or even reform can succeed without support from the socialist or even social democratic countries, he should study the economies of Latin America.

Fox can abuse Dimitrov all he wants, and he can spare me the pieties about Kronstadt. I suggest he look at Bulgarian revolutionary history and the man who faced down Goering at the Reichstag trial before he gets too hoity-toity. As for Tukhachevsky, I hailed the man who helped organize the defense of the Russian Revolution and who was among those rallying the Red Army against the Polish invasion under Pilsudski. I suppose I should accept Isaac Deutscher's tempered observations in *The Prophet Armed* about Tukhachevsky's (and Lenin's) enthusiasm for "revolution from without" and the role of the external proletariat, which my original columns were indeed somewhat intended to honor.

As Ligachev told the comrades in the Gorky oblast at the start of August, in talking about "the correlation between general human and proletarian-class interests . . . we proceed from the fact that international relations are particularly class in character. . . . The struggle for peace and for the survival of mankind is indeed also the struggle for the interests of the working class, for the right of the people to choose their own road and to decide on their own fate." So, yes, I rather wish that Gorbachev had asked Katharine Graham a few pointed questions, such as why, in 1987, the nine top executives at the Washington Post Company pulled down $7.28 million, against persistent meanspiritedness toward the paper's unions and employees. He'd have done a lot more for the international class struggle than he did with the cubic hectares of hot air I complained about. *Alexander Cockburn*

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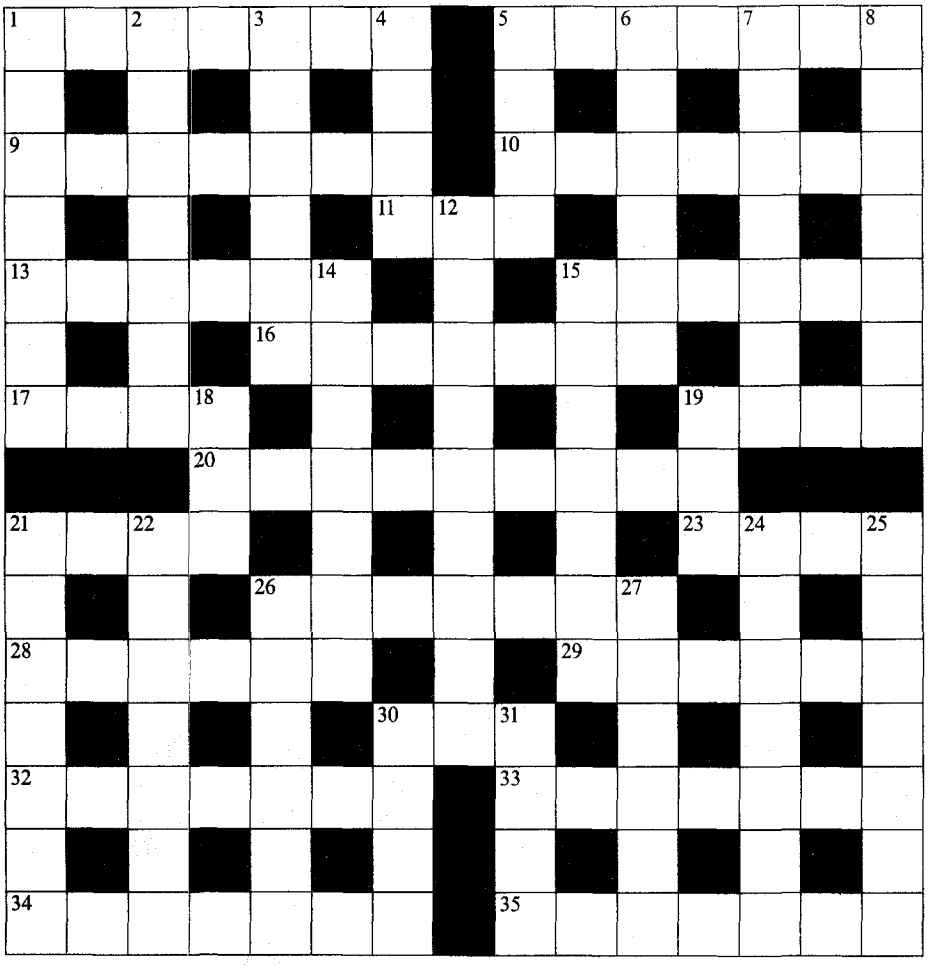

ACROSS

1 and 28 across What some shipbuilders do for those who appear in the glamour magazines? (7,6)
5 Lochinvar's rival was so in love! (7)
9 When a body has no life, it's this. (7)
10 Something to make a bird of, I fancy—a little like the roughage in your diet? (7)
11, and 1 and 5 down An ordinary type of liver should accept them, but not theoretically. (3,5,2,4)
13 Very firm and sort of square inside—not showing much emotion. (6)
15 These certainly wouldn't be to your credit. (6)
16 A 26 down for government officials? (7)
17, 19 and 21 If Old Cole were tied up, he certainly wouldn't be one for open-mindedness. (4-8)
20 Being sold might prove the writer could have made a precious lot! (9)
21 See 17
23 When it comes to this, Scotland might be associated with Dick, as we might say over here. (4)
26 Sort of aced, and sick inside, according to what's at the bottom of the letter. (7)
28 See 1 across
29 You might get in late from it, but involve something by necessity. (6)
30 It comes to a nasty end in a dirty place! (3)
32 We hope to have a full one on hand, which should drive a point home. (4,3)
33 Some flavor—and it gets around, I observe! (7)
34 Rather good looking, like the Eiffel Tower or the Pisa Leaner. (7)
35 See rather poorly around that which might be run on the track, or at least passes for it. (7)

DOWN

1 See 11 across
2 Go up and make a bad score around it, for a tight one! (7)
3 The leaning type—as Pisa certainly ought to be. (6)
4 and 18 Are showers likely on the day that you use it? (4,3)
5 See 11 across
6 The sailor allowed you might get a drink from one! (6)
7 Have a bash, in a way, about oil development—or do away with it all together. (7)
8 Carroll might need someone like Quixote around, with the Gods upset. (7)
12 One wouldn't find it around the unrepentant. (4,5)
14 Everything fades away around it, and fools around a bit. (7)
15 Early producer of what a poetic Miller ran in the river connected with it. (2,5)
18 See 4
19 Your old way of writing? (3)
21 A Kipling character soon gets upset with those that go around with the Japanese. (7)
22 Do people have such an aquaintance with what might be a Homeric behavior, according to some? (7)
24 The first and last letters have a broken seal as part of the plot, perhaps. (7)
25 Fools, as one might say—a product of the French sort of duels. (7)
26 Look, it's in a strange sect associated with secrets, perhaps! (6)
27 Inflammatory affection caused by the spirit shown in a couple of articles. (6)
30 Don't leave the support this way. (4)
31 School lockers might be typified by this. (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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PROGRESSIVISM: CAN IT RISE AGAIN?

What accounts for the sustained, if uneven, decline of political progressivism over the last quarter century? (Rationalizations and superficial answers won't do.) While many factors can rightly be pointed to, not least an unpopular Vietnam war engineered by the "best and brightest" liberal technocrats, we at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW believe the decline has been ongoing because of three fateful and related factors of late-60s vintage: Progressives became disdainful of actual working people; disregarded family values; and lost touch with the traditional religious sensibilities of ordinary Americans.

However many worthy and ethical causes the left has championed – and they are legion – progressives lost the common touch and squandered much of their ethical capital. Consequently, at a profound and intuitive level, progressives lost the *confidence* of common people. And what is progressivism without the people?

Progressivism may be ailing, but it doesn't have to expire. Nor, in order to revive itself, does it need to mimic the brutalitarian neoconservatives. No, all it really needs – and desperately so – is to recapture its own best traditions. As Vanderbilt University political scientist Michael Nelson contended in our pages recently, every period of lasting reform in American history – from Jacksonian democracy and abolitionism through the Populist and Progressive eras, the New Deal, and the civil rights movement – has been animated by a profound *religious* yearning for the transformation of both society and individuals.

Today that yearning is as strong as ever, but most liberals have turned a cold shoulder to it, allowing it to be co-opted and twisted by yahoos, snake oil salesmen, and the vested interests. We say: This is not only dolorous and tragic, but self-defeating.

But there's hope: We are exploring religious commitments that yield humane social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as St. Francis, Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Tawney, Mounier, Rauschenbusch, Niebuhr, Schumacher, William Jennings Bryan, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Lech Walesa, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King Jr., and Archbishop Romero. Also, we probe the literary and philosophical riches offered by such greats as Dante, Emerson, Kierkegaard, Newman, Tolstoy, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Maritain, Merton, Silone, Thomas More, C.S. Lewis, Simone Weil, Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, and Graham Greene. In short, we facilitate your understanding of the social and intellectual vitality of religion and your appreciation of religion's resonances in both high and popular culture.

An ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics, we've been acclaimed by *Utne Reader* as "original," by the University of Chicago's Martin E. Marty as "lively," and by *Newsweek* as "thoughtful and often cheeky."

Those who write for us – Christopher Lasch, Robert N. Bellah, Jean Bethke Elshtain, J.M. Cameron, Henri J.M. Nouwen, Michael Lerner, Robert Coles, Richard J. Mouw, and others – express themselves with clarity, verve, style, and passion. We bat around a wide variety of issues, and defy easy pigeonholing.

If you want to recover the lost soul of liberal politics, if you want to see progressivism rise again, give us a try!

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